

**Through the Lens: Using Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation to
Capture the Development of Career Aspirations of Business
Management and Fine Art Students**

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No part of this project has been previously presented for examination to this or any other institution.

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Abstract

The uniqueness of this study is primarily in the application of a visual research methodology to generate knowledge and understanding in an area that is often associated with quantitative research. Careers and employment research typically focuses on statistical information which can provide general information but does not give an in-depth understanding of the area under study. Visual research can give an in-depth understanding; in addition to giving access to a different kind of knowledge, supported by Harper (2002) who proposes “that images can evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than words alone.” I explore the various ways in which students perceive and develop different career aspiration including what motivates and what might inhibit students’ development of their career aspirations. This understanding will enhance my professional practice and encourage the Careers and Employment department within the University to adapt their service and give students the relevant tools and information to prepare them for employment.

A visual research methodology is utilised as this fits comfortably with my background in art and gives the in-depth knowledge I require for my research (see Clark-Ibáñez, 2004; Collier (1957); Collier and Collier, 1986; Cousin, 2009; Guillemin and Drew, 2010; Harper, 2002; Harris and Guillemin, 2012 and O’Brien, 2013 for further information on the benefits of using a visual research methodology). Auto-driven photo-elicitation (ADPE) is used with six fine art and six business management students. These students often have less career direction and tend to struggle to secure graduate level positions (Swani, 2016); in addition, the two subject areas were chosen because they are a contrast in terms of how their curriculum is delivered. Using visual research to inform careers and employment is unique and through sharing my research and research experience I want to initiate a shift in how careers and employment research is approached in the future.

In addition to the uniqueness of using a visual research methodology in careers and employment my findings indicate there are five orientations business management and fine art students' use when developing their career aspirations: a strong sense of direction, intrinsic and extrinsic motivations, weak planning and dreams. This research discusses the five orientations and the factors that might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building. Subject and professional identity are discussed in relation to identity formation and career building. Four main sources of identity formation are identified: identity through being (transition from study to profession), identity through self-discovery, identity through belonging (concerning the informal and cultural aspects of community life), and identity through peripheral participation (activities that are akin to peripheral participation in a professional community). This research establishes there is a relationship between the development and building of identity and self-efficacy through belonging, professional experience and working alongside mentors when developing strategies to develop career aspirations.

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This practitioner research focuses on my experience and the knowledge I have gained in working in higher education where many students and graduates are not only building their careers but also developing their career aspirations. I have an educational background in business management and fine art; it is the undergraduate students studying these subjects in whom I have a particular interest. It is not just my background that has initiated my interest in these two groups of students. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) who collect information from the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey reveal that 33% of students who studied business management and 42% of creative art and design students are in non-professional type of employment six months after graduation (HESA, 2017). Statistically these students are more likely to be unemployed compared to students who have studied other degree subjects (Swani, 2016). In addition creative art and design graduates have the highest part-time employment rate across all subject areas (Higher Education Statistics Agency, (HESA), 2016a) possibly due to them allocating their working time between three potential types of jobs (Throsby and Zednik, 2011). Through a better understanding of the strategies that fine art and business management undergraduate students adopt when developing their career aspirations, the university will be better able to develop the Careers and Employment service in-line with the needs of the students. The intention would be to improve the employment outcome of the university students which will improve the DLHE employment statistics. Staff performance (determined by the Senior Management at the University) is often judged on the number of graduates attaining graduate level work within six months after graduation. The Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) publishes the employment and destination statistics for all universities. Students and students' parents can access this data through Unistats to help them decide which university

to attend (HEFCE, 2017). For this reason this research is important to the higher education community and student recruitment.

My research is based on a post 1992 university in the West Midlands where I have worked for over fifteen years. The University is one of fifteen universities in the West Midlands and is known as a widening participation university (Host Organisation, 2017). According to a recent TEF2 submission document (Host Organisation, 2017) the University places:

...great value on the life-changing outcomes our courses provide our students. Our graduates enter the job market at a higher level than they might otherwise, and their lives are transformed by the personal development and social and cultural engagement our University community provides. We measure excellence by the employability of our students, the numbers that gain employment (measured through DLHE), and the improvement of their life chances. (Host Organisation, 2017:4)

The West Midlands has one of the highest unemployment figures in the UK (Office for National Statistics, 2017). This University recruits the majority of its students from the local region (Host Organisation, 2017). The national unemployment rate is 1.9%; whereas, unemployment within the region of the University is considerably higher (4.7%) (Host Organisation One, 2016). The unemployment rate is also higher than the wider West Midlands region (2.5%) and higher than the local Black Country average (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton combined = 3.6%). In January 2016, the local authority where the University is situated had the fifth highest Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) claimant rate of all 326 English local authorities at 4.0% (Host Organisation One, 2016). These statistics reveal something about the background of the students in this study, since over 80% of the University intake (including students studying fine art and business management) are from the local area. Once students graduate they tend to stay in the local area and thus move into an environment of high unemployment.

The University has a diverse portfolio of courses which includes career-orientated courses such as education and health studies. There are other courses such as fine art and business management that are less tailored to any specific career. In 2015, there were 19,152 students studying at the University, of which 12,767 students were on a full-time undergraduate degree course. Eight-hundred and twelve students (4.2%) were enrolled in an art-based degree and 2,168 students (11.3%) were enrolled in a business-related degree (Host Organisation, 2015:19). Combined, these two courses represent over 15% of the University's full-time undergraduate degree course population and therefore can potentially have a detrimental effect on the University's overall graduate employment statistic (DLHE). For example, the DLHE report reveals that 6.3% of fine art graduates who studied at the Host Organisation were unemployed (Swani, 2016). This figure is slightly lower for business management graduates where 5.3% are unemployed. The overall unemployment rate for the University is 2.9%, (Swani, 2016).

Returning to the question of widening participation, in line with the British Government's policy, 98.7% of the University student intake is from state schools or colleges and 19.9% are from low participation neighbourhoods (Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA), 2017). The sector average is 11%.

The Black Country (where most of our students originate, live and work on graduation) is among the most deprived regions, relative to the rest of the West Midlands region and the country. (Host Organisation, 2017:7)

As indicated, the consequence of this is that many students come from households where there has been no previous engagement in higher education (first-generation students). The profile of the students is also diverse; for example, 45.8% of the University's student intake is from an ethnicity other than white, of which 16% are from either an Indian or Pakistani heritage. Fifty-nine percent of students are female, reflecting the subject (i.e. the relative size

of the nursing and midwifery) (Host Organisation, 2017). From 2000-2016, successive British governments have unanimously encouraged first-generation students to participate in higher education (Department for Business Innovation and Skills, 2016). Students and the current British Government have different views on why students should go to university. Whereas the Department for Business Innovation and Skills (2013; 2016) places emphasis on the positive effects of higher education on the country's gross national product, students have tended to emphasise the social aspects of university life (Ross and Lloyd, 2013). However, with the introduction of tuition fees in 1998 (Archer, 2003; Leathwood, 2006; Vignoles et al., 2008), including the planned rise in fees in 2016/17 (Allingham, 2016) students are likely to want more than a good social experience and there is more incentive for them to have either a clear career plan or well defined aspiration. In my observations as Head of Employment Services I have found students from a business management undergraduate degree rarely come to university with a career aspiration or any educational aspiration beyond wanting a degree. However over the last few years I have seen a slight shift in the reason for students going to university. Business management students now appear to want more than a degree since many are hoping university will give them a better chance of gaining employment. In contrast, fine art students seemed less orientated on their future employment and indicated that they chose the subject because they enjoyed it. This is contrary to the findings of Glover, Law and Youngman (2002) who found 80% of students entered higher education because they sought an opportunity for a better chance of employment.

Business management and fine art degree subjects are not normally focused on any specific career path. The QAA subject benchmark statements used in higher education to design degree courses refer to the knowledge and skills generally associated with students who have studied a particular degree subject (QAA, 2015; 2017) and determine the focus area of the higher education curriculum and associated employment outcomes. According to the QAA

(2015) Business and Management Benchmark Statements, the skills and knowledge students gain from their degree “...while being highly appropriate to a career in business and management, are not restricted to this...” (QAA, 2015:6). The subject benchmark statements in art and design indicate that graduates gaining the skills in their degree can continue their practice as artists once they graduate. Other career-orientated opportunities include “teaching, self-employment, achieving sustainability in practice and taking time out to do an MA” (Ball et al., 2010:41). I have tried to utilise literature exclusive to fine art students; however, literature on fine art students’ career orientations is usually combined with literature on the creative arts or art and design as in the case of the QAA subject benchmark statements. There is a clear correlation between fine art and creative arts including: a focus on creative practice after graduation and low financial expectations (Ball et al., 2010); however, fine art students often aspire to become an artist (Ball et al., 2010) this aspiration is potentially different to the rest of the creative arts who tend to look to work opportunities where they can use their creativity (Ball et al., 2010). See Appendix A for a comparison between the Art and Design and the Business and Management Benchmark Statements and the generic skills and attributes students should acquire through the study of the subject. What is apparent is the generic skills in business and management and art and design are similar and could be used to prepare students for future careers wider than their subject area. The subject-specific skills in the benchmark statements are geared to specific industries; however, in art and design the benchmark statements are generic and cover all the creative industries. Most of the creative industries work to customer briefs except the fine art sector who prefer to create their own art work to sell. The benchmark statements recognise when the art and design students graduate they will:

...continue their practice, and support this through the sale of their work, commissions, grants and residencies, and/or other employment. (QAA, 2017:11)

Allen and Hollingworth (2013) expand the QAA (2017) statement by stating creative arts are:

...characterised by freelanced, networked and project-based employment, the creative industries demand 'knowledge workers' who are flexible, entrepreneurial and mobile. (Allen and Hollingworth, 2013:500)

The subject benchmark statements acknowledge that many disciplines within the subject, Art and Design, have to become generic and interdisciplinary as this would "prepare students for portfolio careers, emphasising the need for mutability in evolving, creative communities."

(QAA, 2017:10) Freelance and short contract work is very common immediately after graduation, and is often the only work available for art and design students (Ball et al., 2010), thus, the students have to possess a range of skills and attributes to enable them to pursue portfolio careers.

The QAA subject benchmark statements will only be effective if they adapt to local needs and circumstances (Dineen, 2003). With the widening participation agenda Dineen's comment is important as it acknowledges the variation in needs that students may have. Whatever subject students take and whatever their personal agenda, arguably the university offers a transformative experience for its students. Claims of this nature are supported by Slavich and Zimbardo (2012:569) who found that university has the potential to "maximise students' potential for intellectual and personal growth." This growth is not always in the formal curriculum. Stevenson and Clegg (2011), drew attention to the role of the wider university experience in strengthening student identity:

...their (students) involvement in these activities was also partly designed to embed themselves further as students and they were also aware that they were developing skills that were transferable to future employment. (Stevenson and Clegg, 2011:242)

A particularly good example of a transformative experience can be identified in that of an international internship. In my experience the returning students have evidently grown in

confidence and developed an idea of what they want to do in the future. As I discuss in my findings, those students who expressed a strong sense that university was a transformative experience were students who had undertaken work experience. In contrast students' lack of career aspirations seems to be connected to low self-confidence about making decisions about their career, regardless of background, and whether they are a first-generation student. The study is informed by knowledge gained from my experience with students at a post-1992 university.

I adopted a visual research methodology to apply to a subject that is normally associated with research of a quantitative nature (largely survey). There is little qualitative research on the career development of students who are studying a fine art or a business management undergraduate degree beyond a focus on the demographics of the student or pay expectations. The majority of research on career development is based on information gained and extracted from the DLHE survey including the annual report, *What do Graduates Do?* collated by the Higher Education Careers Services Unit (HECSU) and the Association of Graduate Careers Advisory Services (AGCAS). The annual report states that many fine art graduates describe their job title (six months after graduation) as an artist (HECSU and AGCAS, 2014). Fine art graduates, more so than graduates from other degree subject areas, usually work part-time in roles such as retail, catering and bar staff (HECSU, 2013). The annual report also states that 62% of business management graduates are working six months after graduation of which 40% of business management graduates were working in a business-related position.

1.1 Research questions

My commitment to supporting students from a post-1992 university with their career development, in addition to my study of the available literature on careers and employment, where I found several gaps, have prompted the following questions:

What strategies do students use to develop their career aspirations in this context?

What factors might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building?

1.2 Summary of chapters

My thesis is structured as follows: Chapter 2 starts by setting the context of the research and explores the literature on career aspirations of business management and fine art students taking into account the relationship between identity and career aspirations and the relationship between self-perception and self-discovery. Self-efficacy and motivation are discussed in relation to how, and if, these factors can potentially affect student career aspirations. This chapter also identifies the external and internal influencing factors on career aspirations and explores why individuals chose to go to university.

Chapter 3 is focused on the research methodology and will discuss my positionality as a practitioner researcher. This chapter discusses research methodologies and the inspiration I found from reading, implementing and finally conducting visual research. Quantitative methodologies are normally associated with careers and employment; however, my research goes against the norm and uses visual research to help find the answers to my research questions. There are many advantages of using a visual research methodology and method as outlined by Guillemin and Drew (2010) who found visual research gives the participants the

opportunity to create an image that may be difficult to express in words, Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) who discuss how visual research bridges the communication gap, and Milligan (2016) who found visual research can provide access to insider views of everyday lives. Disadvantages are considered as outlined by Strecker (1997) who argues that images alone are open to a range of interpretations, and Banks (2007) who discusses ways in which visual research can unintentionally offend the participant or the reader. After considering the pros and cons of various visual research methods I chose to apply the Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation (ADPE) process to this research. I move onto the research activities where I discuss how I adapted the typical ADPE process to include video and audio recording of the interviews to enable accurate transcribing and where hand gestures are recorded so the photographs under discussion could be recognised. I also discuss ethics, the benefit of an initial study which helped direct the main study, and finally how my findings were categorised into sub-categories and themes which eventually led to the development of five career building orientations.

Chapter 4 Findings and Discussion is split into my two research questions. I start by building on Beaty and Morgan (1992) Learning Orientations Framework which has led to splitting my findings into five orientations related to career building; namely a strong sense of direction, intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, weak planning and dreams. Following this I discuss the factors that might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building focussing on a student's subject and personal identity, belonging activities, networks and mentors in relation to building student career aspirations.

Chapter 5 Conclusions and Recommendations summarises my findings. I consider the implications of the orientations and what supports a rich learning and teaching environment, followed by a reflection on my professional practice and learning. I discuss my contribution to

practice, and I make recommendations on how university careers and employment departments can help students build strategies and develop their career aspirations at university. I also discuss the additional knowledge gained from using a visual research methodology and how photographs reinforce the participants' comments; including, how visual research can assist the researcher to develop new lines of enquiry, giving time to the participant and the researcher to reflect on the images before the one-to-one interview.

Chapter 2 - Review of the Literature

2.1 Focus to the literature review

I will begin this chapter with a brief reflection on how I arrived at a manageable focus on key relevant literature. Initially, my literature review focused on research that considered key elements of students' and employers' perceptions on employment and employability. Initially, the literature review lacked structure and covered elements not applicable to my research, for example, the focus of this research is on the students' perspective and not the employers' perspective, and at the time I was including research from the employer point of view. In addition, at the time of this focus, I took a somewhat over-determinist view of the variables (e.g. class, ethnicity, gender and the labour market or economic position) that might impact on student employability. This initial view was accompanied by a sense that I had to explore a complexity of social factors. Diagram 1.0 was an attempt to map out this complexity.

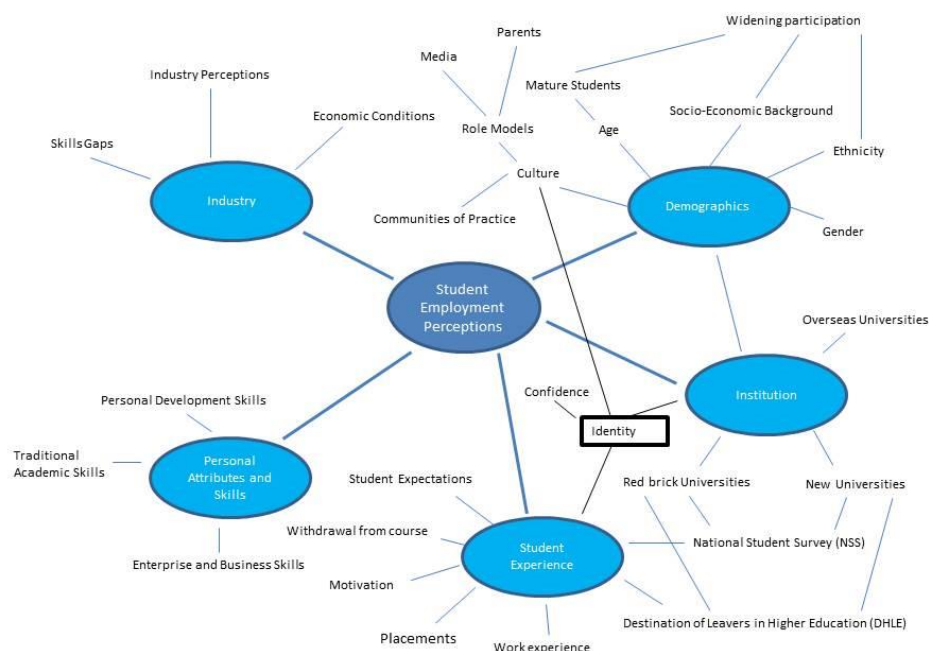


Diagram 1.0 Early Literature Review Mind Map

More recently I became aware of the personal internal drive that could potentially influence career aspirations. According to Duffy and Dik (2009:31) this personal internal drive originates “within the individual whereby individual satisfaction represents the primary motivation.” In other words, a student can be self-motivated and focused in achieving a high salary, social prestige and/or career advancement regardless of background (Argwala, 2008). According to Zimmerman (2000:82) “self-efficacy has emerged as a highly effective predictor of students’ motivation and learning.” Zimmerman (2000) and Bullock-Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014) studies initiated my interest in exploring self-efficacy and confidence in relation to my research questions. Bullock-Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014:29-30) found that students who were undecided on their career have:

...significantly predicted lower career decision-making self-efficacy, more overall negative career thinking, and more career decision-making difficulties. Specifically, findings involving the career decision-making difficulties,...indicated that the undecided participants did not differ from decided participants on general levels of readiness to make a decision, but seemed to possess significantly more decision-making difficulties surrounding deficits in information...These results suggest that although undecided students generally experience more career decision-making difficulties, they do not appear less ready or motivated than decided students to make these decisions.

Self-efficacy is often associated with widening participation students or first-generation students (Leathwood and O'Connell, 2003; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2010). The majority of the participants in my research were from this background, for this reason I decided to explore further. In addition, through my reading on widening participation and first-generation students I became aware how important identity development can be in influencing career building strategies. Research undertaken by Reay, Crozier and Clayton (2010) considered competing identities at university. They said:

Students have a number of competing identities as university students, but also as local and working class. They are jostling work and family commitments with doing a degree,

and often the first two overwhelm and take precedence over studying. (Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2010:115)

If other commitments take precedence over studying, this might also take precedence over, for example, career building. Reay et al. (2010) research findings led my reading into research on identity and informed my discussion and findings.

At the same time as this shift in this position I was aware I needed to have a manageable focus (see diagram 2.0).

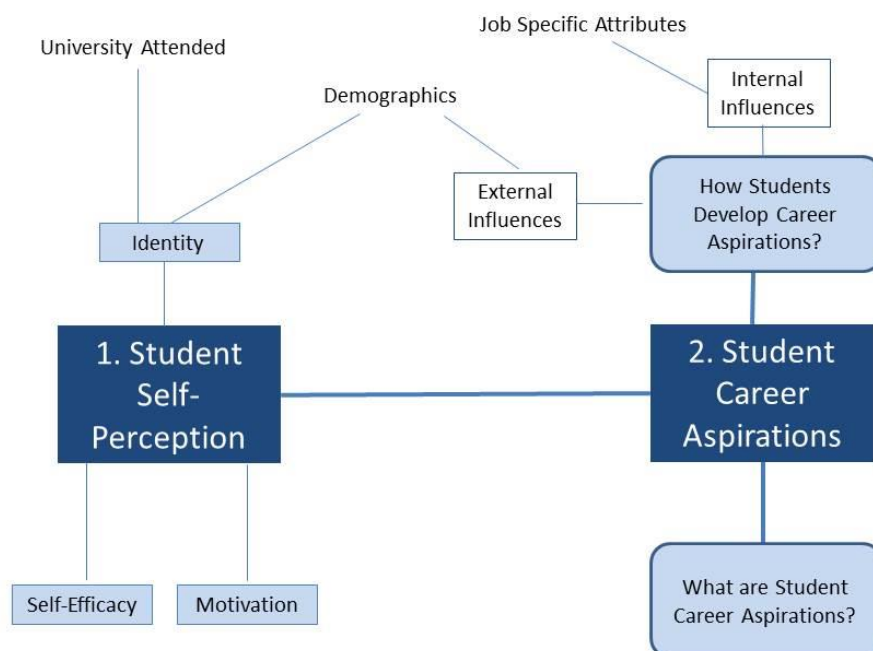


Diagram 2.0 Literature Review at a Glance

I decided to limit the socio-economic literature and focus on research that addressed first-generation students particularly in reference to motivation, self-efficacy and identity as these appeared key to my research and the development of career aspirations for first-generation students. I have taken the definition of first-generation students as students who are the first

in their family to attend university. Within the relevant literature (Connor et al., 2001; Thomas and Quinn, 2007; Lehmann, 2012), many have adopted the term 'first-generation' to embrace more than reductive class references. This research focuses, but not exclusively, on first-generation students and literature on university students from a lower socio-economic background. I am aware the relationship between social class and first-generation is complex and there are weaknesses in using this as a substitute. For example, parents may be working in a professional or managerial role but may not have attended university. I also recognise the ethnicity and gender of a student can affect their career aspirations (Agarwala, 2008; Bhavnami, 2006; Connor et al., 2003; Vignoles et al., 2008; Yorke, 2004). Although ethnicity is not the intended focus of my research questions I have still discussed research on ethnicity that relates specifically to business management students due to 45% of the Host Organisation's student population being from an ethnicity other than white (Host Organisation, 2015).

I eventually honed the literature review down into two areas, namely, student self-perception and career aspirations. Although I have treated the two areas as distinct entities I am aware they overlap and potentially influence each other. The first area in Diagram 2.0 concerns the student self-perception and focuses on identity, self-efficacy and motivation. The literature (Bandura, 1997; Rothwell et al., 2007; Tomlinson, 2008) tells us that students' self-perception is important because it needs to cohere with their career aspirations. This literature explores the importance of how a change in self-perceptions can be created through self-discovery at university. The second area I explored was the students' career aspirations. The literature (Deloitte, 2015; 2015a; Ball et al., 2010; 2010a) considers what type of positions students and graduates not only aspire to, but also what positions they secure. The literature on career aspirations is split into two further areas, how students develop their career aspirations and what their career aspirations are. I have focused my review mainly on literature that refers to

business management and / or fine art students' career aspirations. This literature is frequently based on demographics and parental influence (linked to identity) or economic conditions and internal drivers i.e. job specific attributes. Most of the literature on career aspirations was conducted in the latter half of the 20th century and is based on quantitative data. Research conducted in the 21st century is normally based on information gathered from the DLHE Longitudinal Survey and gives a national picture of the employment of recent graduates in every HE institution across the UK. Where available I have utilised literature specific to fine art; however, and as I mentioned previously, literature on fine art students' career aspirations is limited and is usually combined with literature on the creative arts or art and design. This chapter mainly discusses literature on the creative arts.

2.2 How students' self-perceptions influence career aspirations

Self-perception is a person's view of themselves through observations of their own behaviour (Bem, 1972). Through observing their own behaviour students will develop an opinion of their ability and act accordingly, for example if a student thinks they do not have the ability to achieve a task then they will act that way. The following sections consider the issues relevant to self-perception and how identity can influence career aspirations, and the effect self-efficacy and motivation can have on the development of career aspirations. I recognise that self-perceptions and identity are complex but I limit my own inquiry to the theme of career aspirations and career building.

2.2.1 The relationship between identity and career aspirations

There is no academic consensus on the meaning of identity (Anderson, 1991:3) although most would agree "identity is not fixed or essentialised, rather it is produced and constructed"

(Boland, 2010:1). I have consciously not discussed intersectionality as discrimination and oppression stood outside of my research questions. However, I am aware of the theory of intersectionality and how, for example, gender, sexual orientation, social class and ethnicity are all interwoven and make up an individual's identity, and how intersectionality contributes to the specific type of systemic oppression and discrimination experienced by an individual; instead I have taken a more holistic view to keep my focus narrow. Erikson (1980) proposed a model of identity development that went through the stages of a person's life. Erikson believed that a sense of competence motivates behaviour and actions and each stage of a person's life must make the individual feel a sense of mastery. This mastery and motivation on behaviour may be important to my research because students, particularly widening participation students, are new to the university experience and may be developing their identity in-line with the University policies and procedures before they envisage the next stage of their life which may or may not be related to their career. The following comment made by Rothwell et al. (2007:10) supports Erikson's theory:

...typically the first in their families to go to university, that achievement in itself may have been a result for them to the extent that their desire for a 'graduate job' came second...

Rothwell et al. (2007) acknowledges first-generation students may need to take one stage at a time. According to Erikson's (1980) theory the mastery of the first stage, going to university, should lead to the next stage of development.

Goffman (1990) focused on the 'dramaturgical self' and suggests we present ourselves differently to others depending on who we are with i.e. we enact different roles. It is something we do rather than who we are. Goffman's research on presentation of self may also be important to my research particularly in relation to students from a widening

participation background who may present themselves differently from their home life to university and this could have an effect on how they develop their career aspirations.

A different dimension of identity formation is provided by Lave and Wenger (1991). They argue that professional identities are formed within communities; learning is social and comes from the experience of working with others:

Communities of practice refer to a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, or a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis (Wenger, McDermott, Snyder, 2002:7).

Induction into a professional community requires participation in it as a 'peripheral participation'; this requires learning about the sub-culture of a profession as much as it involves subject competence. Identity is described by Wenger (1998) as a "constant becoming"; it defines who we are. However, "identity is not some primordial core of personality that already exists...our identity is something we constantly renegotiate during the course of our lives" (Wenger, 1998:154). Wenger (1998:149) describes identity and practice as "mirror images of each other." Students may identify with a community; however, they also need to be recognised by others in that community as members; otherwise they will move out of that community.

In addition, to the internal dynamics of a community, there are influencing factors such as gender, ethnicity, religion, social class, culture and family (Ashmore, Deaux and McLaughlin-Volpe, 2004). Students attending university from a widening participation background may have to juggle multiple identities (Read, Archer, Leathwood, 2003; Reay, Crozier and Clayton, 2010). It should be remembered that identity "...is constructed in social contexts, the temporality of identity is more complex than a linear notion of time" (Wenger, 1998:154).

Identity is formed from all elements of a person's life and "...should be viewed as a nexus of multi-membership" (Wenger, 1998:159).

2.2.1.1 In what ways university attended influences student identity and career aspirations

There is a considerable scholarship on generic and subject specific employability: Blasko (2002); Morley and Aynsley (2007); Rothwell, Herbert and Rothwell (2007); Tomlinson (2008) are particularly relevant to my inquiry. Their focus is on employment and employability perceptions at a post-1992 and/or pre-1992 universities. These studies have all concentrated on the same four components of employability 'my university,' 'my field of study,' 'the state of the external labour market' and 'self-belief.' Of the few studies that take a student perspective Rothwell et al. (2007) compared student perceptions of their future in post-1992 and pre-1992 universities; they examined a sample of 351 second year undergraduate students on a business related course. Rothwell et al. (2007) research suggests:

...employability, when considered on its own, may be most to do with choice of subject, then the influence of the university brand and the labour market, then skills and market-awareness, and least of all to do with their perception of the adequacy of their engagement with study. (Rothwell et al., 2007:8)

Rothwell et al. (2007) also found that students from a pre-1992 university had higher expectations in terms of securing a graduate level job with a renowned employer. For students from a post-1992 university going to university was an achievement in itself, and where the desire for a graduate level job was less articulated. Post-1992 student expectations may not be as high due to the students' self-perception and self-efficacy. As I elaborate later, Bandura (1997) discusses how levels of self-efficacy can affect a person's decision on choice of activities, effort and persistence, and how a person with low self-efficacy will avoid the task -

in this case visualising a graduate level job. The research with students from a post-1992 university resonates with the students' biographies that I have collected; however, I did not find the sixteen questions posed by Rothwell et al. (2007) enabled a rich picture of student perceptions in a pre- or post-1992 university; notably the research does not explore what the students were aiming for in their employment.

Another study conducted from a student's perspective was by Tomlinson. Tomlinson's (2008) work focuses on students' perceptions of the role of higher education credentials for graduate work and employability. The students in Tomlinson's (2008) qualitative study were from a variety of degree disciplines within a pre-1992 university. The majority of students in the study believed they would not enter a graduate job based entirely on their graduate-level credentials. This opinion was due to students feeling there was a large supply of graduates leaving higher education, more so than in previous years (Department of Education and Employment, (DfEE), 1998). A minority of students believed they would secure a graduate-level job depending on the labour market conditions they were entering i.e. job shortages and employment inequalities (see Brown and Hesketh, 2004 and Moore, 2010 for an explanation on the impact of economic conditions on the graduate labour market). Similar to Rothwell et al. (2007) research findings with pre-1992 university students, many of the students in Tomlinson's research studied towards a degree with the aim of securing a well-paid job.

Tomlinson's (2008) research has not been replicated in a post-1992 university. The students in Tomlinson's study believed that the learning experience of a graduate from a post-1992 university was more relevant to the world of work, but this was off-set by the status of a pre-1992 university which was seen as a way of gaining a positional advantage in the labour market. Kirton (2009) would agree with Tomlinson, that students, particularly first-generation students, felt disadvantaged in the job market if they did not attend an 'elite' university, and

this feeling was replicated by the students interviewed who had a 'clear sense that employers harboured a deep-seated bias towards students with traditional academic profiles' (Tomlinson, 2008; Stuart et al., 2008). This type of comment suggests students believe the university attended can affect their success in the job market and this could impact on their confidence in securing a graduate level job.

Gbadamosi et al. (2015) found some students believed their success in the graduate labour market is down to luck or is influenced by degree classification as well as the university they attended (Blasko, 2002; Rothwell et al., 2007 and Tomlinson, 2008). This opinion was echoed by some students who were from a pre- and a post-1992 university and from students who were on target to achieve a high degree classification (Rothwell et al., 2007).

2.2.2 The relationship between self-perceptions and self-discovery and the development of career aspirations at university

Associated with, but distinct from, the university as a career enabler is the question of the university role as transformative at the personal level. Ball et al. (2010) found creative graduates placed a high value on their higher education experiences and the learning approaches and opportunities provided by the creative curriculum for their development. For instance fine art students value the experience of peer learning through giving and taking criticism. In addition they gain confidence through the process of critique and presentation on their course (Ball et al., 2010). The opportunity for self-discovery through the transformative university impacts on the development of the student's identity. Ball et al. (2010) study found that creative graduates felt university had prepared them or progressed their career aspirations; however, the fine art students would have liked more focus on entrepreneurial skills in the curriculum.

Slavich and Zimbardo (2012:576) describe transformational teaching:

as the expressed or unexpressed goal to increase students' mastery of key course concepts while transforming their learning-related attitudes, values, beliefs, and skills.

Matheson and Sutcliffe (2017:24) found through their research that:

Learning opportunities that are embedded in real world experiences, problem based, and other reflective activities are critical in underpinning transformation.

According to Beder (1997), becoming a student is not only about acquiring new academic skills, it is also about developing a student identity and this is often created through a sense of belonging. This has clear resonances with Wenger (2001). Transformation, identity change and the development of a sense of belonging are often supported through peers and tutors who can offer emotional and social support (Wilcox, Winn, Fyvie-Gauld, 2005). Peers and friends "can act as a buffer against the stress of feeling alone..." (Wilcox et al., 2005:712) and tutors who are approachable, and will listen to students as well as structuring the course to "encourage students to get to know each other better..." (Wilcox et al., 2005:717) can help students to develop a sense of belonging. In addition, to developing students' sense of belonging tutors can provide:

...a curriculum that enables students to think creatively beyond the here and now, offering visions of the future, and the identification of those means by which such visions might be achieved. This challenges the concept of both content driven curricula and problem-based approaches, and moves towards an appreciative inquiry approach allowing students to 'dream'. (Matheson and Sutcliffe, 2017:21)

The way the curriculum is delivered to enhance students' learning and self-discovery may be important to my research in the development of students' career aspirations; however, it should be remembered that students do not enter university with the same goals and abilities (Slavich and Zimbardo, 2012) and the students' motivation for learning may be very

different (Wolters and Taylor, 2012) and thus an adaptable curriculum to support the students' needs is essential.

2.2.3 Self-efficacy and the effect on student career aspirations

The effect self-efficacy has on career aspirations is a concept applicable to my research questions because self-efficacy is the "students' belief in their ability to succeed" (Gbadamosi et al., 2015:1086) or as Bandura (1993:118) described it "efficacy beliefs influence how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave," or "people's belief in their capabilities to produce given attainments" (Bandura, 2012:15). People with a weak sense of self-efficacy tend to avoid making career decisions and according to Bullock-Yowell, McConnell and Schedin (2014:24) if a student avoids making a career decision it could lead to "...financial difficulties, lack of employment and lowered self-esteem and self-efficacy." Peterson, Samson and Reardon (1991) cited anxiety as a potential outcome and Iroegbu (2015:171) cited "stress, depression and a narrow vision of how best to solve a problem." In addition, an individual will believe a task is beyond their capabilities and instead will focus on negative outcomes (Bandura, 1994). Whereas, positive or a strong sense of self-efficacy can affect career choice, development and career aspirations (Bandura et al., 2001). In addition, self-efficacy can increase student motivation and persistence (Bandura, 1993), occupational capabilities and academic achievement (Bandura et al., 2001; Bandura et al., 1996). Individuals will also develop an interest in the task, and any setback they may encounter they will see as a challenge that can be overcome (Bandura, 1994; 1997).

Bandura identified four major sources of self-efficacy:

1. Mastery experience - where students can develop their self-efficacy through practice i.e. work experience which can eventually lead to the development of aspirations.

Mastery experiences are the most influential source of efficacy information because they provide the most authentic evidence of whether one can muster whatever it takes to succeed. (Bandura, 1997:20)

2. Social modelling - i.e. role models, seeing people similar to them achieve specific tasks can give the student the self-confidence to also aspire to achieve the same.
3. Social persuasion - refers to direct encouragement or discouragement from another person for example encouragement from peers, family or academic staff can increase self-efficacy.
4. Psychological factors - a student's response and emotional reaction to a specific situation can alter their mood and stress level which can impact on their self-appraisal of their capability which can affect their self-efficacy.

Maddux (2002) suggested a fifth source based on 'imaginable experiences' where a student can develop their aspirations and increase self-efficacy through imagination. However, Williams (1995) found that by simply imagining oneself doing something well is not as strong an influence on self-efficacy as actual experience.

According to Carroll et al. (2009:811) there could be "...two facets to aspirations: what an individual wants to achieve and what they are capable of achieving." This is an important issue and one worthy of further examination; however it currently stands outside of my research and outside of my discussion on self-efficacy.

2.2.4 Motivation and the effect on student career aspirations

An individual's self-efficacy in a given area will affect their motivation, for example, individuals tend to be motivated to participate in activities at which they excel (Schunk and Pajares, 2002) because they have high self-efficacy to complete the task. Motivation involves a constellation of perceptions, interests and actions (Lai, 2011). Students have varying levels of motivation and self-efficacy depending on the activity or task undertaken. There are two main types of orientation to motivation – intrinsic and extrinsic motivations. According to Ryan and Deci (2000) definition, intrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable, and extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, for example, money, grades and praise or avoiding punishment (Ryan and Deci, 2000). In addition to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation there is also altruistic motivation which refers to the desire to improve the welfare of another person without the expectation of getting a reward or have any other reason that may indicate some level of self-interest (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992). Students who decide to go into teaching are often described as having an altruistic motivation (Brookhart and Freeman, 1992:46). I would disagree that teaching is an altruistic motivation because teaching is a paid occupation and fine art students often go into teaching to give them a stable income (Ball et al., 2010a) allowing the individual to continue with their art. Batson (1991) goes further and suggests altruistic motivation does not exist at all and that all motives are ultimately based on self-interest. I would also disagree with Batson (1991) as I believe an individual will always get something from what they do but their decision to do it may not be based entirely on self-interest.

According to Valerio, (2012:30) a teacher's role is to develop students' intrinsic motivation:

Motivation plays a significant role in a student's learning and development. It is part of teachers' pedagogy to develop in students the desire for new knowledge and understandings.

Valerio's statement is one of the main purposes of the subject benchmark statements. Valerio (2012:30) continues:

All students are unique; educators, through implementing a variety of motivational techniques, can have considerable influence on students' participation and self-expression.

"Motivation is seen as a drive, students are viewed as being driven by factors out of their control." (Beaty, Gibbs and Morgan, 1997:76). Beaty et al. (1982) developed the Orientations to Learning Framework to provide a means of gaining a better understanding of the complexities of motivation and how motivations can influence learning (France and Beaty, 1998). This framework:

does not set out to type students, rather it sets out to identify and describe types of orientation and to show the implications of different types of orientation for the approach a student takes to learning. (Beaty et al., 1997:76)

The following section on student career aspirations will highlight some of the internal and external factors that can influence students and their career aspirations.

2.3 Student career aspirations and internal and external influencing factors on student career aspirations

Whilst existing data (mainly through the DLHE survey) provides a detailed picture on the state of the graduate labour market, less is known about the career aspirations of students other than the variables that can affect career aspirations including gender (Mau and Bikos, 2000; Patton and Creed, 2007; Powers and Wojtkiewicz, 2004), family, which Greenhaus and Powell (2006) and Saleem et al., (2014) discuss as being a significant category of external influencing

factors, socio-economic status / first-generation (Gutman, and Schoon, 2012; Howard et al. 2011; Mau and Bikos, 2000), ethnicity (Howard et al. 2011; Kirton, 2009) and self-efficacy (Gbadamosi et al., 2015; Bandura, 1994).

In an attempt to gain knowledge towards my objective of finding out how Careers and Employment Services can support students in developing and building their career aspirations I have split the literature on career aspirations into two key areas; the first concentrates on how students develop their career aspirations. I have split this section into two sub-categories: external influencing factors which focus on demographics (Connor et al., 2003; Kirton, 2009; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Vignoles et al., 2008) and internal influencing factors which are directed by a student's personal internal drive i.e. salary (Kirton, 2009; Moy and Lee, 2002; Piotrowski and Cox, 2004). Through an understanding of the internal and external influencing factors further context will be added to my research. The two categories external factors and internal factors interact together in varying degrees so it is not normally one element that is influencing an individual's choice-making process (Duffy and Dik, 2009). The second key area in the literature is the career aspiration. Ball et al. (2010; 2010a) research appears to be the only comprehensive research that is focused on creative students' career aspirations so I have focused my discussion on Ball et al. (2010; 2010a) research; whereas, my discussion on business management students' career aspirations focuses on research conducted by Deloitte (2015; 2015a).

2.3.1 External influencing factors

Understanding the exact elements that determine one's career aspirations is difficult especially when research can yield different results; for example, Mau et al. (2000) argue that female students have higher career aspirations than men, whereas Patton and Creed (2007)

argue the opposite and Powers and Wojtkiewicz (2004) would argue they are the same. Both Mau et al. (2000) and Patton et al. (2007) have strong arguments. Mau et al. (2000), through a longitudinal study, found women expressed significantly higher occupational aspirations. The explanation for this finding was that it:

...may reflect greater awareness of high level professional career opportunities for women brought about by better communication and observation of role models provided by female professionals. (Mau et al., 2000:192)

Patton et al. (2007) argues the opposite. They found that male students were more likely to choose professional occupations than were female students. Both Mau et al. and Patton et al. are backed by other researchers. There are several potential reasons for the discrepancies. A possible explanation highlighted by Howard et al. (2011) may be that the historical trend of females having lower aspirations than males may be changing. There are other variables that may influence findings particularly related to demographics, for example, Howard et al. (2011) highlighted both socio-economic status and ethnicity could have significant effects on occupational aspirations.

A similar example can be found in Kirton (2009) and Rothwell et al. (2007) studies with the discussion on securing graduate training programmes. Kirton found that securing a graduate training programme was the main focus for business studies students. Kirton (2009) explored the career plans and aspirations of graduates in a post-1992 university from a business studies degree background with a specific focus on ethnicity, the family background, reason for the choice of degree, career plans (immediate and future) and career aspirations. Nearly all the participants in Kirton's (2009) study were hoping the outcome of being awarded a degree was a good salary and their career plan was focused on securing a graduate training programme which is contradictive to the research findings of Rothwell et al. (2007). The reason for the different research findings could be because Rothwell et al. (2007) research was based on all

ethnicities whereas Kirton's study was focused on black minority graduates, who according to Cassidy, O'Connor and Dorrer (2006) and Vignoles et al. (2008) tend to be more career focused than their white counterparts. Vignoles et al. (2008) study found ethnicity can influence university choice and degree choice. Cassidy et al. (2006) found white students chose a wide variety of degree courses whereas 44% of Pakistani participants and close to 50% of Indian participants chose courses related to Medical Sciences. Another research report by Connor, Tyers, Davis and Tackey (2003) indicated Black African students tended to study Engineering. Law, Medicine, Dentistry and Medicine-allied subjects were popular with Indian and Pakistani students and Mathematics, Computer Sciences and Business Administration courses were chosen by Black African, Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Chinese students. There was no indication in Cassidy et al. (2006); Connor et al. (2003) and Vignoles et al. (2008) research whether or not there was a difference in ethnic student perceptions based on the type of university they attended, or who or what influenced the student to study a particular degree programme.

Emerging from research by Connor et al. (2003), Stuart et al. (2008), Tomlinson (2008) and Vignoles et al. (2008), more ethnic minority students attend a post-1992 university and these students normally have a career plan. According to Gbadamosi et al. (2015) having a career plan was not just relevant to ethnic minority students. They found that "the majority of students seem to be clear about their career aspirations and the value of their higher education qualification in furthering this." Gbadamosi et al. (2015) research was conducted with students from a diverse range of ethnicities studying towards a business degree. Three hundred and fifty-seven UK students from two post-92 universities took part in the research. Whereas students who attend a pre-1992 university are less clear on their career plan (Stuart, et al. 2008) and these students are largely from a white ethnicity. Greenbank (2011) disagrees that a lack of career plan only applies to pre-1992 university students. Greenbank's (2011)

research focuses on first-generation students in a post-1992 university, and he found a lack of future career orientation was a common occurrence for all post-1992 university students. I found no research which tries to explain why students from a white ethnicity have no career plan when they apply for a university degree course. The degree programme chosen was not highlighted in Connor et al. (2003), Stuart et al. (2008), Tomlinson (2008) and Vignoles et al. (2008) research; however, many ethnic minority students study degrees leading to specific careers. The reason why ethnic minority students attend post-1992 universities, according to Bhattacharyya, Ison and Blair (2003) is that ethnic minority students (particularly Black Caribbean, Pakistani and Bangladeshi students) are more likely to enter higher education with vocational qualifications than white students. The difference in entry qualifications between post-1992 universities and pre-1992 universities has meant more ethnic minority students attend post-1992 universities.

I draw attention to the issue of ethnicity because nearly half of the student population in my university are from a British minority ethnic background. I would not want to suggest that behaviour inheres in such backgrounds. Rather there are common experiences, including vulnerability to discrimination, that are important to bear in mind. This includes parental influence.

The majority of research on parental influence on career aspirations focuses on BME students or cultures outside of the UK, for example Agarwala (2008) focuses on students living in India. Agarwala (2008) found that the:

'father' exerted the greatest influence on the career choice of students in India, for both male and female students. For female students, the second most important influence was that of the 'mother.' However, for male students, 'friends', that is, the peer group played a more important role than the 'mother.' (Agarwala, 2008:368)

Moreover, Garcia, Restubog, Toledano, Tolentino and Rafferty (2012) focus on students living in Australia. Garcia et al. (2012) found that parents who influence their children can also give support which includes encouragement, assistance and emotional support that can affect their child's career aspirations (Garcia et al., 2012). In addition, parental support can boost the child's career decision-making self-efficacy (Garcia, Restubog, Bordia, Bordia and Roxas, 2015).

There are several studies carried out in the UK that consider the parental influence on BME students in their choice of degree and career decisions (Connor et al., 2003; Kirton, 2009). Out of the few studies that are not focussed on BME students and considers UK students Polavieja and Platt (2014) found that:

....children's educational and occupational attainment is highly dependent on parental background. Families with greater cultural and economic resources tend to have higher attainment aspirations for their offspring and to transmit these aspirations to children themselves. They are also in a position to directly support their children's occupational ambition through increased opportunities and investment. (Polavieja and Platt, 2014:35)

Ross and Lloyd (2013) Access for All study focuses on the 34% of (UK) students who wanted to go to university but thought about not applying because of the costs of fees and living expenses. Ross and Lloyd (2013:4) found:

Young people who lived with a degree-educated parent were far less likely to be concerned about the financial aspects of higher education than other young people.

A parent who has been through the university system can make it easier for the young person to recognise the benefits and overcome any concerns that might otherwise deter them from applying. A minority of young people also claimed that parental or family pressure was important to their decision making. Ross and Lloyd (2013) research was conducted before the 2012 financial reform in higher education where fees rose and were capped at £9,000. The

results of their study may change if carried out today. I found no relevant literature that refers specifically to fine art students and the role parents or demographics may play in the student choice of degree and career aspiration.

There is a lack of evidence to support the argument that personal biography, for example, gender and being a first-generation student can influence a graduate's achievement in the labour market (Gbadamosi et al., 2015). However, there is evidence to support the argument that it is the graduate's individual skills, motivation and personal qualities that can affect their success in the labour market (Moreau and Leathwood, 2006). Several researchers including Tomlinson (2008) and Littlejohn and Watson (2004) would agree that motivation could shape the graduate's success in securing a job whilst overlooking demographics and university attended which are sometimes used as a justification for failure within the labour market.

In summary, research is indicating ethnicity and family can influence career direction, and first-generation students feel disadvantaged in the job market if they do not attend an elite university (Kirton, 2009). According to Tomlinson (2008) and Kirton (2009), as indicated, research shows students believe the university they attended can impact their career; however, students who have a strong personal internal motivation can change the above conception.

2.3.2 Internal influencing factors

I found no research specifically relating to art and design students that discussed the internal factors that influence students' career aspirations, and research with business students dates back over ten years unless the research has a focus on ethnicity i.e. Kirton (2009). The findings indicate business students look for extrinsic awards (Moy and Lee, 2002). According to Moy

and Lee (2002) nine job attributes are considered by business students when making career decisions, namely, long-term career prospects, pay, job security, managerial relationships, fringe benefits, working conditions, involvement in decision-making, responsibility given and marketability. The three main attributes that students consider are: long-term career prospects linked with potential higher earning and social status, pay, and job security which may be due to the economic climate in 1999 when the research took place. In 2002 similar results were found by Piotrowski and Cox (2004) who found students studied business with the intention of improving job opportunities, followed by an increase in potential income. Kirton (2009) and Moy and Lee (2002) found that business students aspired to work in large organisations rather than SMEs because they associated better pay, additional benefits and career prospects with them. The conventional view of business students, highlighted by Dougherty, Dreher, and Whitely (1993), is that they are considered to be somewhat mercenary in their career orientation. Kirton (2009); Moy and Lee (2002); Piotrowski and Cox (2004) indicate pay is the main influencing aspiration for students which to an extent support Dougherty et al. (1993) comment.

Pay, according to Culpepper (2006); Moy and Lee (2002); Ng and Burke (2006) and Oh, Weitz, and Lim (2016) is one of the key attributes that students consider when making career decisions; however, pay is not a key attribute for all students. The cost of a three-year degree for an arts graduate is approximately 27K, but according to Universities UK (2007) report, over a lifetime an arts graduate will earn 35K more than a person with no additional qualification, minus the cost of the degree leaves a total of 8K. Based on these figures finance does not appear to be the main influencing factor why a student enters higher education to study art. My interpretation is supported by Ball et al. (2010:18) who stated “low pay is a feature of creative careers” and “creative graduates are prepared to sacrifice financial reward for the personal satisfaction they derive from creativity.” Ball et al. (2010:7) backs this statement

further by stating “creativity is an important motivating factor and central to career satisfaction.”

Significantly, Marks et al. (2000) have shown that the role of attitudes, motivations and aspirations are just as influential when developing career aspirations as the internal and external factors highlighted above. So far I have considered the factors that might influence fine art and business management students career aspirations; however, I have not considered what career these students are hoping to go into. This might be important to my research in understanding where students are heading in relation to their career and could potentially be used to encourage university staff to put strategies in place to help students reach their career goals.

2.3.3 Business and management undergraduate degree students’ career aspirations

Unlike fine art there is no major piece of research on business and management students’ career aspirations; instead, I have focused on two pieces of research that will add context to my research. The first piece of research is a report, Talent in Banking Survey, 2015 compiled by Deloitte from information recorded in the Universum Talent Survey 2015 report where 211,000 business students were surveyed across thirty countries. The second piece of research is the UK-specific report once again compiled by Deloitte. The top two career goals of business students are: work life balance and security or stability in their job. Internationally, the third goal is to be a leader or manager of people; (Deloitte, 2015) whereas in the UK the third goal is to have an international career (Deloitte, 2015a).

Internationally, the top ranked industry to work in for business students is software and computer services (Deloitte, 2015). In the UK the results are slightly different, 22% of business students are attracted to banking. Software and computer services are ranked fourth (Deloitte, 2015a). If students aspire to work in banking, software and computer services as indicated by the Deloitte (2015; 2015a) reports then universities may want to adjust their curriculum to support students in reaching this aspiration. There is also a gender difference in the aspiration to work in banking. Female business students are not attracted to banking for two main reasons: they believe they will find it harder than males to progress in banking and they also believe they will be paid less than their male colleagues (Deloitte, 2015; 2015a). Their suspicions are well founded. Reed, a UK-based employment agency reports that females in banking earn 22% less than their male counterparts (Reed, 2015). The top two employers UK business management students aspire to work for, according to Deloitte (2015a), are Google and Apple. In addition, research has shown (Deloitte, 2015a; Kirton, 2009 and Moy and Lee, 2002) that business management students aspire to work in large organisations as they believe they can access the benefits highlighted earlier (long-term career prospects, pay, job security, managerial relationships, fringe benefits, working conditions, involvement in decision-making, responsibility given and marketability).

2.3.4 Fine art undergraduate degree students' career aspirations

The largest longitudinal study carried out with art-based graduates was undertaken between 2008 and 2010 by Ball et al. (2010a:6). Twenty-six higher education institutions took part, following the early career plans of 3,500 art-based graduates who qualified between 2002 and 2004. The findings highlight several key aspirations for art graduates. The first is "teaching is an important career destination." The survey found 33% of art and design graduates had experience of teaching in their early careers (Ball et al., 2010a). Graduates may derive

satisfaction from combining teaching with their creative practice to enable them to broaden their income rather than having to rely on portfolio careers where financial reward is not renowned. According to Ball et al. (2010:xi) "success equates with achievement and creative fulfilment above financial reward." The research carried out by Ball et al. (2010a) does not indicate whether or not the student started their art course with the intention of pursuing teaching at a later date or whether this aspiration was developed whilst at university. This research also found that art students tend to "...aspire to creative careers...(and their) career plans (were) most influenced by a strong desire for new learning..." (Ball et al., 2010a:1). Ball et al. (2010a) found that after graduation 72% of art and design graduates had undertaken further study or informal learning and over a quarter of the art and design graduates had returned to higher education to study at a higher level. The research does not indicate if the further study and informal training was in an art and design related area. However, in a later study carried out by Ball et al. (2010) it is hinted that postgraduate study was taken to progress the graduates' practice. Ball et al. (2010) stated:

For the future, sustaining a living through creative practice is a commonly held goal. For many, setting up their own enterprises to fulfil ambitions and undertake postgraduate study to progress in their practice are important aspirations. (Ball et al., 2010:xi)

Students have to make a lifestyle choice when they choose a creative education and where a creative outlook is already a way of life. After graduation, goals and aspirations usually remain focused on creative practice (Ball et al., 2010).

Ball et al. (2010; 2010a) reports give an insight into the career plans and aspirations of recent graduates; however, the research is of a quantitative nature and does not give a deep understanding of what graduates are aspiring to, or the background reasons why they have given certain answers to the questionnaire. Although they give a useful broad picture, the

survey questions are closed and structured around the Lickert scale, for example, *how important are the following in the decisions you make about your career: earning a good salary, not at all important, not very important, fairly important and very important?* The question leaves no room for expansion or reason for choice. If a cash incentive is offered to fill in the survey, as in this case, there is also the potential problem of individuals completing more than one survey (Konstan et al. 2005).

2.4 Why does an individual choose to go to university?

Understanding why students go to university will provide information towards answering my second research question – what factors might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building? For example, if students come to university with a career plan are they expecting the university to help them achieve their career plan? in which case the university may have to put plans in place to support the students in reaching their career goals. Alternatively, the student may be looking to university for a career inspiration or career aspiration, and then the university may have to adapt its teaching accordingly. There is flexibility within the QAA Subject Benchmark Statements to adjust the curriculum to support student needs. According to Ross and Lloyd (2013) there are five key reasons for attending university. Namely, it would lead to better opportunities in life; a good or better job; better or higher qualification; a well-paid job; and the experience of undergraduate life including the opportunities it provided for a good social life and for meeting new people. I would also add that some students go to university because they want to continue to study a particular subject. Beaty et al. (1997) and Henderson-King and Smith (2006) would add that some students use university to escape from future responsibilities or a stressful home environment.

...for many students, however, their own reasons for joining the university are affected by outside pressures from, for example, family, school or employment. (Beaty, Gibbs and Morgan, 1997:72)

Greenbank's (2011) study found students tend to go to university because they are unsure what else to do, and it means they can put off difficult decisions about their career for three years. This finding may change with the recent rise in tuition fees. The creative art and design courses have already seen a 2% drop in enrolment across the UK from 143,210 to 140,080 students. However, since the introduction of tuition fees there has been a slight rise (2%) in student numbers for business and administrative courses (HESA, 2015). This may be because students believe the actual employment outcomes of business management graduates will lead to a well-paid job or employment.

According to Glover et al. (2002); Kandiko and Mawer (2013) and Watts (2006), "the primary purpose for students entering higher education was to improve their career prospects and as a pathway for career enhancement" (Kandiko and Mawer, 2013:9). Studies by Elias and Purcell (2004), Universities UK (2007) and Vignoles et al. (2008) have shown that graduates earn more over a lifetime than a person with no additional qualifications. According to the Universities UK (2007) study the difference in earnings for a business and finance graduate is around £184,694 (earned over an average lifetime) and an arts graduate around £34,949 although Purcell et al. (2005) have found evidence that the wage premium for graduates is declining.

Research undertaken by McCann Erickson in 2015/16 identified that students at the University where this research is carried out overwhelmingly choose to:

...study to enhance their career prospects and/or gain entry to a particular career or profession. For this reason the primary measure of excellence for our students is their employment outcomes on graduation (DLHE). (Host Organisation, 2017:6)

The national picture supports the comment that students tend to choose to go to university to enhance their career prospects (Glover et al., 2002; Kandiko and Mawer, 2013); however, as I mentioned previously there is contradictory research which argues otherwise (Beatty, Gibbs and Morgan, 1997; Henderson-King and Smith, 2004; Ross and Lloyd, 2013).

To conclude, for this research the key contextual reference points in the literature that underpin the research questions are as follows: a) why students choose to go to university; b) Ross and Lloyds (2013) five key findings (better opportunities in life, pay, good job, qualification and experience); c) to escape from responsibilities (Beatty et al., 1997 and Henderson-King and Smith, 2004). Secondly, the literature review has also revealed that students have three influencing factors: the first concerns demographics (Kirton, 2009; Mau and Bikos, 2000; Patton and Creed, 2007; Rothwell et al., 2007; Tomlinson, 2008), parents and peers (Saleem et al., 2014) and being a first-generation student (Archer and Hutchings, 2000). The second concerns questions of identity, motivation and self-efficacy (Gbadamosi et al., 2015; Bandura, 1997). The third factor concerns financial rewards which would appear to be one of the main attributes that affects students' career aspirations (Culpepper, 2006; Moy and Lee, 2002; NG and Burke, 2006; Oh, Weitz and Lim, 2016). Financial gain does not appear to be the main reason why students choose to study fine art; they normally turn to portfolio careers to support their artistic practice (Ball et al., 2010). From the literature review I identified the following research gap namely, a qualitative focus on the way in which students perceive and develop their career aspirations which, as previously stated, led to the following research questions:

1. What strategies do students use to develop their career aspirations in this context?
2. What factors might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building?

Chapter 3 - Research Methodology

The literature review identifies a paucity of qualitative research capable of capturing students' sense-making in terms of their career intentions or aspirations. Accordingly, the focus of my inquiry seeks to respond to the following research questions:

1. What strategies do students use to develop their career aspirations in this context?
2. What factors might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building?

This chapter explores a) qualitative and quantitative research methodologies; b) my research positionality, paying particular attention to the insider versus outsider perspective; c) why I chose auto-driven photo-elicitation as a means by which I gathered evidence to address the above questions and d) how I made sense of this data.

3.1 Qualitative and quantitative research methods

I have worked in educational settings for 24 years, 14 years in higher education supporting first-generation students and graduates into employment. For much of that time I relied on – and indeed compiled – quantitative data. I now see quantitative data as a starting point, as 'setting the scene' for further investigation. Indeed the data gathered from the Destinations of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE) survey complemented and directed my study in that it informed from which degree courses graduates struggle to achieve employment and therefore I concentrated my research in two of these areas, namely business management and fine art. Statistics can offer broad brush strokes about what is happening. For example from the Destination of Leavers in Higher Education (DLHE), 2015/2016 we know that 13.5%

of the Host Organisation's graduates chose to continue their studies (Swani, 2017). What statistics do not explain is why these graduates so chose. As Kaplan and Maxwell (1994) write:

Understanding a phenomenon from the point of view of the participants, and its particular social and institutional context is largely lost when textual data are quantified. (Kaplan and Maxwell, 1994:26)

The problem here is that quantitative data must be reduced for intelligibility and boxed up for the identification of trends and predictions. My focus – in keeping with an interpretivist approach – was to conduct an inquiry into meanings and this requires a dialogue with students to capture a depth that is unavailable in surveys.

Harper's (2002) paper *'Talking about Pictures: A Case for Photo-Elicitation'* initiated my interest in exploring visual research further. The two observations that particularly 'grabbed my attention' were "images evoke deeper elements of human consciousness than do words" and when comparing visual research to standalone interviews Harper (2002:13) spoke of evoking "a different kind of information beyond words." I kept reverting back to Harper's (2002) observations. This idea that images can get to a deeper meaning appealed to my own disciplinary background and this informed my decision to use visual research.

3.2 Positionality

I situate my research in an interpretivist tradition. This does not mean that any kind of interpretation is valid. Interpretivist accounts must be plausible and trustworthy. I have tried to achieve this by discussing my positionality and by exposing as much of the student responses and visual examples as possible. The aim of interpretivism is to search for ways in which respondents make sense of their world. The photos offered by the students support

this aim. Researcher positionality requires a reflexive examination of the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Ganga and Scott, 2006) and an engagement with researcher insights. The notion of researcher objectivity in qualitative tradition is modified by the acceptance that the researcher experience and skills are part of the research process. Traditionally, many researchers in qualitative research were positioned inside or outside of the social group contributing to the research. But this is no neat division because it is a blurred line as Moore explains:

'Insiders' are individuals who have a place in the social group being studied before the start of the investigation and 'outsiders' are non-members of the group. (Moore, 2012:11)

Similarly, McNess, Arthur and Crossley (2016) said:

We are all both insiders and outsiders: members of some groups and not of others by reasons of gender, language, cultural / professional background, nationality, ethnicity and age. (McNess et al., 2016:26)

Whatever the method, all research takes a perspective based on a pre-existing knowledge, understanding and world view (Cousin, 2010).

Our knowledge of the world is always mediated and interpreted from a particular stance and an available language, and that we should own up to this in explicit ways. (Cousin, 2010:10)

Similarly Berger in his seminal book, *Ways of Seeing*, concludes that 'the way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe' (Berger, 1972:8) Similarly for the audiences, developing meaning and understanding in any research will depend on what they bring to their reading (McNess et al., 2016). The challenge is not simply about eliminating or minimising bias because it is also about what the researcher brings to the research process in ways which enrich the enquiry. This may concern the scholarship the researcher brings to the

enquiry or it may relate to experiential knowledge. In my case such knowledge comes from an art background as well as my professional position as Head of Employment.

Subedi (2006) proposes four characteristic elements of a reflective approach: the scholarship we address; the nature of the empirical data; the assumptions we deploy; and our experience of the field.

3.2.1 Characteristic elements of a reflective approach (as determined by Subedi, 2006)

Alongside the empirical basis to my study sits my inquiry into the scholarship. Charmaz (2006:166) observes that the literature review “set(s) the stage for what you do in subsequent sections or chapters.” Again what I select to bring into view is framed by the perspectives I bring to that selection; in particular, my professional practice and my artistic background. I decided to review the literature before analysing the data for several reasons; firstly, I needed to be sure that my research questions had not already been answered in previous research and secondly, at the time of my reading I was still searching for an appropriate methodology to apply to my research. My approach is supported by El Hussein et al. (2014:7) who said: “a review of current (and pertinent) literature is needed for methodological reasons.”

There is a standard literature based on quantitative surveys which I have discussed as useful but not in terms of the search for meanings I wanted to pursue. There is also a growing literature on visual research methodology upon which I drew. I discuss this later in this chapter. The visual can be defended as a site of explication in its own right, its ineffable dimension means that some of the visual is beyond words; however, my intention was never to interpret the images only to use the visual as a means of eliciting accounts. I am aware that through my beliefs, experience, professional and artistic background I will develop pre-

conceptions (consciously and sub-consciously) and try to make meaning of what the image is representing. These pre-conceptions will need to be disregarded so a non-bias view is taken and the participants are given the opportunity to create their own sense of meaning.

It is important not to treat data as evidence; some of it will be, some of it less so. What I choose to collect, and where, will be informed by what I think is important to look at.

According to a grounded theory approach, we look at our data inductively; the idea is to see what it seems to be saying. The challenge is to try and set aside what we expect to find. A further challenge is to be clear what I am claiming for the data. Is it proof? Or is it illustrative? Does it help us grow our understandings? These are all the more difficult when handling visual data. I do see visual research as a prompt and as something to hold up the word-based data; however, the visual is also a site of explication in its own right, for example, without any verbal explanation Meo (2010) could see the family's deprived living conditions from one of her participant's photographs.

Moving away temporarily from my discussion on visual research I can empathise with first-generation students as I was the first in my family to attend university, and my experience is echoed by Thayer (2000) who claimed:

Students from a low-income and first-generation background face obstacles that include: lack of knowledge of the campus environment, its academic expectations, and bureaucratic operations; lack of adequate academic preparation, and lack of family support. (Thayer, 2000:5)

At times I felt totally out of my depth at university, not knowing who to turn to for support but at the same time not wanting to show any weakness to my peers or tutors. As a first-generation student defined as an individual whose parent / guardian did not receive an undergraduate degree (Choy, 2001; Pascarella et al., 2004) I understand how hard it is to make decisions on career and university choices when family and friends are unable to offer

any appropriate advice and guidance. My experience is echoed by research conducted by Gardner and Holley (2011:87) who found first-generation students “didn't have a clue about how to begin their educational journey,” and Christie et al. (2008) who found first-generation students anxious whilst at university due to the lack of support and advice from family:

Emotional dynamics are most pronounced amongst students with no previous familial experience of higher education, where there is no reservoir of knowledge to draw upon. In such cases the acquisition of a learning identity is complex and contradictory: it can evoke powerful feelings of displacement, anxiety and guilt. (Christie et al., 2008:569)

Research conducted by Archer and Hutchings (2000); Read et al. (2003); Reay et al. (2010) and Wilcox et al. (2005) also articulate aspects of first-generation student experiences that resonate with my own experiences. However, although I am from a first-generation I have not been subject to all aspects experienced by first-generation students. Generalisations must be treated with caution. For example, I do not know what it is like studying while having to look after children or elderly parents. These factors can push and pull first-generation students between home and university; it also affects commuting students. Wilcox et al. (2005) found first-generation students have to negotiate between their old life (family, home and friends) and their new life at university (new friends, policies and procedures) and Reay et al. (2010) comments that students have to:

...manage competing demands of paid work and family responsibilities with being a student, the students only partially absorb a sense of themselves as students, and their learner identities remain relatively fragile and unconfident. (Reay et al., 2010:14-115)

In addition to the potential financial problems that are also frequently associated with first-generation students (Reay et al., 2010) they often have to work part-time or live at home and attend the closest university to where they live. In a study by Reay et al. (2010) students who still live with their families:

...cited a combination of location and financial reasons for choosing to study for a degree at Eastern (local university to their family home) rather than the more distant local university. (Reay et al., 2010:111)

Similarly, in Archer and Hutchins (2000) study, it is suggested that:

...working-class respondents generally positioned themselves 'outside' of HE (for example constructing HE as a white, and/or middleclass place), placing themselves as potentially able to take advantage of the benefits it can offer, but not as 'owners' of it. (Archer and Hutchins, 2000:570)

These concern questions of 'belonging' to which I can relate albeit from different experiences.

For instance, it was hard for me to identify with the doctoral programme community.

Colleagues were from an academic background and I did not feel quite at home. Part of my experiential knowledge came from my professional background which I came to integrate into my thinking.

The assumptions practitioner researchers deploy firstly involve an ethical dimension. As a University employee, I have a responsibility to protect the reputation of the University but this does not mean I will only report on the positive aspects of the research. The ethical issue is to 'do no harm' and this does not exclude critique as such though I have to be mindful of Costley and Gibbs (2006) distinction:

are insiders who have inside knowledge not only of systems but also of the individuals they designate, for the purpose of the research as subjects, and this creates for them a different ethical position than say, for researchers able to research and then leave the context of their research space. (Costley and Gibbs, 2006:89)

Secondly, it involves my experiential knowledge as an insider. I slide backwards and forwards along the insider and outsider continuum. I have an insider perspective through elements of my demographics and the knowledge of the cultural resources and 'pre-existing social realities and routines' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) apparent within the University through my

professional practice. I have a first degree in fine art photography in which I learnt to discuss and explore images, and I also have a degree in business management. However, my age and the rank I hold at the University place me at a distance from research subjects although as Hellowell (2006) maintains there are:

...varying shades of 'insiderism' and 'outsiderism'. The more important point has to do with empathy, trying to understand the other person, or the other context, rather than closeness or distance. Moreover, it can sometimes become apparent that the same researcher can slide along more than one insider-outsider continuum and in both directions during the research process. (Hellowell, 2006:489)

Taylor (2011:9) describes an insider perspective as 'insider blindness' and discusses the potential for data distortion and the lack of objectivity. I would prefer to describe it as 'insider vision' as the word blindness gives the meaning a negative connotation. Taylor (2011) was not necessarily disputing the power of an insider perspective, earlier in her paper she discussed a scenario where one of her research participants whom she knew gave very intimate information on drugs and often implicated herself; whereas another participant she did not know was very guarded with her response giving short sharp comments. Taylor (2011:13) suggests "that intimacy – prior personal knowledge of your subject – generates a different kind of response – potentially a more detailed one". Taylor (2011) explains:

My professional relationships with informants I know intimately is however, quite different. In such instances, periods of interviewing and data gathering are prolonged, and formal interviews are augmented by ongoing opportunities to talk with and observe these people in moments that are significant yet often random and unexpected – moments that one is only privy to as a result of intimate contact. (Taylor, 2011:10-11)

On several occasions during my own research I had to treat my assumptions with caution. For instance, I had assumed erroneously that because students were now paying tuition fees and given the number of employability initiatives universities now put in place, a high percentage of students, regardless of degree subject, would have a career plan in place.

Bearing in mind the factors above and to maximise respondent disclosure, I developed a conversational style in the face-to-face interview as part of the ADPE process. As part of rapport building, I included my own relevant experience; however, I was selective in what I said, fearing that my management position within the University (if known) might stifle the participants' openness when discussing their photographs.

I am still a practising photographer who has a dedicated interest in the visual arts. A visual research methodology felt comfortable to me bearing in mind my background in art. Indeed, the creative element might appeal to fine art students because of the visual element. I hoped that applying a visual research methodology might also interest and inspire students to take part in the research as it is a different format to the traditional surveys and interviews used in Careers and Employment research. In the early days of my study, it was suggested that I should consider using a more traditional methodology or combine ADPE with a more traditional research method, for example, case study. This view misunderstands ADPE as a mixed data method in which visual and words are treated as interrelated texts capable of generating fresh understanding.

3.2.2 Potential biases and pre-conceptions

As I mentioned previously, I have worked in higher education for over 14 years in a post-1992 university supporting students to find work experience. During this time I have found very few students appear to have a clear career aspiration or career direction and the students who have a career aspiration do not have the tools or knowledge to create a strategy to reach their aspiration. In addition, some students appear to want immediate results i.e. they expect to walk out of the university employment service with a job.

The above paragraph identifies assumptions that I have taken as universal truths, but instead, they have been crafted by my own unique identity and experiences of the world. My views are constrained by the limits of my own experience; if I was to work with traditional students who were not from a first-generation background or with students who were studying a degree related to a particular profession, would my views be different? Through the realisation that my assumptions are based on my positionality and can bias my views of the world, it is important I have an open mind moving forward in my research. It is through awareness and acknowledgement of my background, knowledge and perspective that I hope not to prejudge the data or force predetermined explanations on it, supported by Strauss and Corbin (2015). To enable me to do this it is important I listen to my participants as everybody has a unique perspective. By designing a research methodology that gives the participants the opportunity to lead the interview and reporting what they have said in their own words I hope to remove some of the assumptions I have made. Before working in higher education I had a career in photography. To uncover the pre-conceptions and prejudices that might be present from my time as a photographer I decided to perform several pilot studies (discussed later in this chapter). I have no intention of interpreting images or looking for or uncovering any subliminal messages; however, I was aware that my photography background may bring certain preferences and I may subconsciously read an image in a particular way.

I recognise that the visual is its own kind of language and that this is the view of someone at home with the visual but nonetheless I was feeling my way as I progressed my inquiry; I hope I have shown in this thesis that a visual methodology has much promise. My assumption has been that the visual enriches how we express experiences. Whether this is so, is an unknowable to some extent, not least because I cannot know what other methods would yield.

3.3 Visual research methods

There are three main strands to visual research. The first employs the social researcher to create the image. The image could be created via film, photography, drawing, note-taking and so forth (Banks, 2007:6). The participant may or may not be aware of the creation of the researcher's image(s). The second strand employs the participant to produce or consume the image. The participant will normally have a social or personal connection with the image they produce (Banks, 2007:7). Inviting participants to create a visual representation through drawing, photograph or film can increase their thoughtfulness about the research theme. (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006). Asking students to take photographs as part of the research design can provide access to insider views of everyday lives (Milligan, 2016). This allows the researcher to enter the participant's life in and out of university (Milligan, 2016). The two visual research strands are gaining increasing attention from researchers. In recent years, a third strand has emerged where the researcher and participant work together to create a collaborative image.

Visual research methodologies provide participants with the opportunity to create an image that conveys something that may be difficult to express in words (Guillemin and Drew, 2010). According to Cousin (2009:213), "the visual often connects with an emotional dimension that simple questioning loses." Images alone are open to a range of interpretations (Strecker, 1997). As Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) state:

The interpretation has to come from the person who made the artefact (photograph). My own (researcher) guess or speculation about someone else's meanings are just that – guesses and speculations. (Gauntlett and Holzwarth, 2006:86-87)

The first type of visual method as outlined by Banks (2001) - making visual representations - did not fit with my research questions. The second and third types of visual method as

outlined by Banks (2001) - examining pre-existing visual representations and collaborating with social actors in the production of visual representations could possibly fit with my research questions. I decided to explore both types of visual methods linked to photo-elicitation and auto-driven photo-elicitation.

3.4 Photo-elicitation and auto-driven photo-elicitation

Photo-elicitation has been used by social scientists since anthropologist John Collier (1967) introduced it as a viable methodology (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004) although photo-elicitation is still not a commonly used technique (Van Auken Frisvoll and Stewart, 2010). Studies that have used photo-elicitation have concentrated on social class (Slutskaya, Simpson and Hughes, 2012; Steiger, 1995), community (Johnson, Sharkey and Dean, 2011; Suchar and Rotenberg, 1994; Tremlett, 2013), identity (Clark, 1999), gender (Allen, 2012; Skeggs, 1994), culture (Ali-Khan and Siry, 2014; Fleury, Keller and Perez, 2009), health (Drew, Duncan and Sawyer, 2010; Oliffe and Bottorff, 2007; Owen, Duncan and Sawyer, 2010) and education (Donoghue, 2007; McGregor, 2004; Meo, 2010).

Photo-elicitation refers to the use of photographs as a stimulus during a research interview (Meo, 2010). There are at least two forms of photo-elicitation, one is where the researcher chooses the images for discussion and the participants comment on these images and the meaningfulness to them (Cousin, 2009:219; Harper, 2002:13). The second is auto-driven photo-elicitation where the participant generates the images for discussion in response to a researcher-initiated assignment (O'Brien, 2013; Pauwels, 2013) and where participants can use their photographs to communicate dimensions of their lives (Clark-Ibáñez, 2004). In ADPE interviews, the participant is normally more prepared than in many other qualitative research methods where the participant is rarely "given instructions to reflect on the issues to be dealt

with by the interview" (Van Auken et al., 2010:382). In ADPE the participant has time "to ponder the photo-taking tasks, and actually take the photographs prior to the interview" (Van Auken et al., 2010:382).

The advantages of photo-elicitation include the potential to reduce power imbalances (Epstein et al., 2006; Meo, 2010; O'Brien, 2013). O'Brien (2013) used auto-driven photo-elicitation methods in his research and found it gave:

the young people the chance to control the interview situation and equalise, as far as possible, the power relations....I felt that this worked well, and the freedom and confidence this provided the young people allowed them to bring up topics within the interview that were of obvious importance to them, but that I would not have otherwise thought to ask about. (O'Brien, 2013:168)

Prosser (2007:24) went slightly further stating "Photo-elicitation promotes respondents' and not the researcher's agenda" enabling them to decide what is important to them. Photo-elicitation gives the participant the opportunity to lead the conversation rather than the researcher through the choice of photographs discussed. This process can reduce status differences between the participant and interviewer (Collier and Collier, 1986). An additional benefit Collier and Collier (1986:105-7) raised is that the awkwardness the participant may feel during an interview can be reduced. Eye contact need not be maintained, and silences can be minimised by referring to the photographs. The photographic content will always provide something to discuss. Collier and Collier (1986) and O'Brien (2013) found the participants who took part in the photo-elicitation interviews tended to introduce topics that had not been raised during the traditional interview. Photographs can also help participants to conceptualise and articulate aspects of their personal circumstances that they may not previously have considered in any depth (Guillemin and Drew, 2010) or find it hard to articulate (Collier, 1957). According to Collier (1957):

One of the foremost services of photographs as a research aid was their function as a language bridge. The graphic image can assist an informant who lacks fluency of words to make clear statements about complex processes and situations. (Collier, 1957:858)

As signalled, according to Clark-Ibáñez (2004); Collier (1957); Cousin (2009); Harris and Guillemin (2012); Harper (2002) images have the potential to produce different and richer data than other techniques by evoking deeper elements of human consciousness than can be stimulated by words alone. When discussing the strength of visual stimuli Collier noted a more subtle function of graphic imagery:

...its compelling effect upon the informant, its ability to prod latent memory, to stimulate and release emotional statements about the informant's life. (Collier, 1957:858)

Collier and Collier (1986) also noted that photographs stimulate thoughts and prompt memories that are not always contained in the images. When discussing photographs emotional power, LeClerc and Kensinger (2011) stated:

...for pictures, the effect of emotion might be in evidence immediately and might be evoked relatively automatically, whereas activation of emotional responses for word stimuli may require more in depth and controlled processing. (LeClerc and Kensinger, 2011:520)

According to Harper (2002) and Padgett et al. (2013) we respond differently to images than language. Images can address the limitations of language as a means of creating and communicating knowledge (Bagnoli, 2009; O'Brien, 2013). In O'Brien's (2013) study photo-elicitation was used with young deaf people to equalise the power imbalances caused by linguistic differences. I did not experience linguistic differences with the participants. However, my experience echoes that of Bagnoli (2009), O'Brien (2013) and Guillemin and Drew (2010) who found images helped the participants formulate their discussions and explain specific points that they felt were key to the research questions. This may be because

the participants taking part in the research have in advance of the interview gone through an iteration on the basis of the guidance and purpose of the photographs. Photographs assist participants “to formulate discussion and explanation of complex experiences and ideas.” (Guillemin and Drew, 2010:178). Collier (1979) expands on Guillemin’s and Drew’s comments by adding:

Picture interviews were flooded with encyclopaedic community information whereas in the exclusively verbal interviews, communication difficulties and memory blocks inhibited the flow of information. (Collier, 1979:281)

Van Auken et al. (2010) found photo-elicitation can aid recall and more evocative accounts of incidents than traditional interviews although as Mizen (2005) rightly explains images alone do not elicit useful research material, the images need to be viewed with background information and contextual data to avoid misinterpretation. Collier (1967:49) states that “methodologically, the only way we can use the full record of the camera is through the projective interpretation by the native.”

O’Brien (2013) found the initial preparation for the auto-driven photo-elicitation task time-consuming. My experience echoes O’Brien’s experience. It was not only time-consuming for me but also for the participants. Some of the participants during O’Brien’s research and my research did not complete the auto-driven photo-elicitation interview due to the time required to collect and shoot the photographs; this was not a factor encountered during the traditional interviews conducted by O’Brien. However, before I launch into the implementation of my research it is important that a discussion on ethics takes place as there are additional ethical challenges in visual research to textual-based research that need to be considered.

3.5 Ethics in visual research

Research should (as far as possible) be based on voluntary informed consent. Personal information should be treated confidentially, and participants anonymised unless they choose to be identified. Research participants should be informed of the extent to which anonymity and confidentiality can be assured in publication and dissemination and of the potential re-use of data. (Wiles et al., 2008) “The ethical issues raised by visual research are, arguably, distinct from those raised by textual data.” (Wiles et al., 2008) I referred to the British Sociological Association (BSA) ethical guidelines (2002), the BSA’s Visual Sociology’s Group (2006) Statement of Ethical Practice, the Association of Social Anthropologists (ASA) ethical guidelines (2011) and the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) ethical issues as they all have elements of ethical guidance for visual method researchers. However, BSA and ASA ethical guidance only refer to copyright and video-interviews in visual research, similar to Cox et al. (2014) who are all visual method researchers and who have designed ethical guidelines for using visual methods in research. Cox et al. (2014) presented six categories that are important to consider when using visual research: confidentiality, minimising harm, consent, fuzzy boundaries, authorship and ownership, representation and audience. The first three categories are normally considered in any research undertaken whereas the last three categories are particularly relevant to visual research.

Anonymity is included in this section as confidentiality and anonymity are very closely linked. According to Christians (2005:145) “Confidentiality must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure.” When using text-based research, pseudonyms are often used to protect the participant’s identity (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012:126) although it does not guarantee anonymity in its entirety (Hammersley and Traianou, 2012:127-128). When using visual research, especially photographs, confidentiality and anonymity become a little more

difficult (Banks, 2001; Pink, 2013). Decisions need to be made about what to anonymise in an image.

Hairstyle, clothing, jewellery, tattoos, and the places where individuals are photographed can all breach confidentiality and reveal, to those who know them, the identities of the individuals concerned. (Wiles, Clark and Prosser, 2011:696)

Conversely over-anonymising data can also be a danger....with the result that any subsequent use of the image may appear somewhat meaningless. (Wiles, Clark and Prosser, 2011:696)

A growing body of evidence (Fontes, 1998; Grinyer, 2002; Guillemin and Drew, 2010; Wiles, Crow, Charles and Heath, 2007; Wiles et al., 2012) is starting to indicate that participants do not always want their identity to be hidden. The argument against anonymisation is “to respect respondents’ rights to be seen and heard” (Wiles et al., 2012:44). The arguments put forward for retaining visual identification has mainly been from young people who have expectations of being identified (Wiles et al., 2012). According to Wiles et al. (2012) the reasons young people participate in research: “were often because they thought they would be identified and they wanted to be able to demonstrate to others that they had been involved in research” (Wiles et al., 2012). Maintaining a visual identity is important to some participants. It is about having a message and making their views visible. Researchers identified this as a particularly pertinent issue for some stigmatised groups i.e. people with disabilities for whom being ‘seen’ was viewed as a way to challenge stigmatisation (Wiles et al., 2012).

Care has to be taken to protect the participants’ well-being including their interests, sensitivities and privacy (Cox et al., 2014). In some cultures, certain visual research methods may offend participants similarly the subject matter could be upsetting for some people (BSA, 2006). Participants may feel vulnerable to criticism if their personal story is suddenly exposed

to an external or unknown audience (Cox et al., 2014). It is not unusual for participants to later regret their level of openness or identifiableness with which they previously felt comfortable. For this reason, a researcher must be flexible and respect their participant's decision if they wish to withdraw their consent of using certain images and stories. When consent for the use of images is granted the visual researcher still has an ethical duty to consider the risks that the publication of visual data might hold for the participant (Wiles et al., 2012).

In visual research consent is required when using or taking another person's photograph. SRA (2003) defines consent as:

...a procedure for ensuring that research subjects understand what is being done to them, the limits to their participation and awareness of any potential risks they incur. (SRA, 2003:28)

Firstly, consent to participate in the research must be voluntary and not forced (Faden and Beauchamp, 1986). A participant must have sufficient information, and adequate understanding of the research aims to enable them to make an informed choice on whether to participate in the research (Cox et al., 2014; Faden and Beauchamp, 1986). According to Faden and Beauchamp (1986) researchers should create a climate that encourages participants to ask questions and elicit their concerns about their involvement in the research. Consent forms are the normal method used to gain consent for the use of images (Wiles et al., 2007) however, more and more researchers are using verbal consent, particularly with the criminal populations (Coomber, 2002) and groups with low literacy levels (Banks, 2001).

Children may appear in the images presented by the participants, and the ethical guidelines will need to be applied in relation to consent, confidentiality and protection from harm. There is also an additional ethical challenge that concerns the use of family photographs. Family

photographs were probably taken by different individuals to the research participants who are not available to give consent for the use of their image in the research (Wiles et al., 2008). The person in the image has also not given their consent for their picture to be used. According to Wiles et al. (2008) participants "employ their own highly complex ethical systems of 'consent hierarchies' to their family photos to help them make decisions about their use." As researchers we should also make the decisions about their use (Wiles et al., 2008).

Consent entails not only consent to take or make visual images but also consent to use images (Wiles et al., 2008). A signed consent form does not give researchers autonomy to use the photographs in unlimited ways (Pink, 2013:54). "Researchers wishing...to use images made by others by, for example, publishing them should be aware of laws that safeguard copyright." (Wiles, Clark and Prosser, 2011:688) Copyright rests with the participant; it is necessary for the participant to assign copyright to the researcher for the subsequent use by the researcher. While legally the person who takes the photograph owns the image, and this person can assign copyright to the researcher, the people in the images have not necessarily given their consent to the image, and this can pose another problem. I will return to consent when I discuss the briefing forms in the section eliciting photographs.

"In visual research methods boundaries between the roles of researchers, participants, artists and others involved in the project can become blurred." (Cox et al., 2014:15) Gubrium, Hill and Flicker, (2013:2) described these boundaries as 'fuzzy boundaries' where "confusion between where priorities lie (research versus practice) can lead to very different implementation approaches." Potentially all qualitative research that involves the researcher building rapport can blur the researcher's role (Cox et al., 2014). This blurring creates ethical challenges. I have commented at length on the ethical issues because they are distinctive for visual research.

3.6 Research activities

My research is centred on photographs and quotations taken from twelve students who were studying fine art or business management at a University in the West Midlands. The methodology was trialled twice to see if it was compatible with my research requirements.

3.6.1 Pilot study

I practised the process of Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation on a number of students from the University. Some of the participants were mature; others were in my intended research age range (18-24). The degree subject also varied. I practised the process with Humanities students, Law and Childhood studies students, Creative Arts and English Language students. All of the participants appeared to understand the process and interact with it at a level where I could yield evidence to address my research questions. To pilot the research design and methodology (Baker, 1999:182) two small studies were undertaken. The fine art students were chosen to take part in the pilot study as they were representative of the intended main study participants. According to Teijlingen and Hundley (2001:2) "...a small group of volunteers, who are as similar as possible to the target population" should take part in the preliminary study. The initial study should be, and was, administered in the same way as the intended main study to improve reliability (Peat et al., 2002:123). I followed the ADPE process. Initially, the intention was to only conduct this research with participants from a fine art background but as the pilot study progressed I kept thinking of all the other degree subject students who had assisted in my early preparation and the information I had gathered from them. For this reason the research criteria was widened to include another degree subject group. I decided to concentrate on two degree subjects. Business management participants were chosen because they are a contrast to fine art participants in terms of how their

curriculum is delivered. I was hoping the evidence acquired from these two groups of students would help support my professional practice which could impact on the University's DLHE figures.

There were two noteworthy issues emerging from the pilot stage concerning the images - the first issue raised was when I tried to apply the "Interpretive Engagement" framework, developed by Drew and Guillemin (2014) to the interpretation of the images produced by the participants. This framework focuses on the images produced and the context of their production as part of the research process. So far, the framework has only been applied to visual research on health-related topics. However, the framework principles are designed so they can be applied to all photo-elicitation studies. This method of analysis builds on critical visual methodologies as proposed by Rose (2012). The 'interpretive engagement' framework comprises three stages of meaning-making including: meaning-making through participant engagement (Stage 1), through researcher-driven engagement (Stage 2), and through re-contextualising (Stage 3) and they are used in combination with five key elements, namely, the researcher, the participant, the image, the context of its production and the audience/s. Each plays a significant role, contributing to the overall analysis. However, in the main study I decided to take some, but not all of the principles and apply them to my research, namely giving the participant the opportunity to interpret and give meaning to the image, and to listen, theorise and see patterns in the data within the context of the theoretical framework. I realised I was not interested in interpreting the images, as I was intending to use the images as prompts. As mentioned previously by Strecker (1997) and Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) images can be misinterpreted by the researcher. I did, however, find the strength of this framework was in its ability to make me consider and question a variety of factors as to why a photograph was taken. It also made me consider how I might unintentionally influence the participants through the student briefs; plus, the framework also leads the researcher into

questioning the ethics of the image through spending more time analysing, or in my case viewing the photograph.

Secondly, some of the images chosen by the participants were not original pieces of artwork; they used Clip Art and all they appeared to indicate was that the future was 'bright.'

Moreover, during the one-to-one interview I became aware that the participants who had submitted Clip Art images appeared to have put very little thought into why they had chosen their images. Students' investment in the research seemed proportionate to the quality of the image. This pilot finding alerted me to the need to specify clearly the kind of image I was looking for.

3.6.2 The study

The participants were asked to take six original photographs on a camera, iPad or mobile phone that were meaningful to them in terms of their university experience and / or that had influenced their career choice or ambition. I excluded videos or clip art. Another photograph had to sum up their career aspirations or an ambition. A photographic device was not issued as all participants had access to at least one piece of equipment that could take photographs. Over 72 photographs were generated by the participants. In the literature on using ADPE there is no consensus on the number of photographs that should be taken or used in a photo-elicitation interview. In earlier photo-elicitation studies and where the participants may not have access to a photographic device, cameras were given to the participants. Twelve plus photographs were often presented to the researcher; however, not all the photographs were discussed during the photo-elicitation interview and often the participant had to choose which images they wanted to discuss (Ali-Khan and Siry, 2014; Fleury, Keller and Perez, 2009). In Fleury et al. (2009) study, the participants were asked to discuss six to eight photographs out

of their initial 24 photographs. There is no indication why this number was chosen; although, Meo (2010) may have an explanation; Meo found where there are 12 or more photographs there are numerous shots of the same subject.

The student brief I designed (see Appendix B) asked participants to take six photographs as this would give the participants' time to discuss all their photographs during the face-to-face interview and it would also give the participants the opportunity to expand and justify choice. I was also aware that participants may have initially taken more than six photographs and with digital technology deleted them during their decision-making process. The process of choosing which images to discuss could potentially benefit the research interview by giving the participant time to prepare, think and consider the reasons for choosing specific images (Van Auken et al., 2010).

3.6.2.1 Respondent sample

The collection of data was undertaken during November 2013 to November 2015 with students from a post-1992 university based in the West Midlands. With over 19,000 students the University has one of the largest intakes of first-generation students (widening participation groups) in the UK (HESA, 2017a). In line with the Host Organisation student population the majority of students taking part in this research were from a first-generation background. "To maximise the potential variation" (Ashwin, 2006:54), twelve volunteers recommended by academic staff for being open and engaging and who were representative of their course took part in the research. While noting brief biographic detail below, no claim is made about representativeness. Twelve participants took part in the research from the Host Organisation, six from a fine art degree and six from a business management degree. Ten of the participants were female, and two were male (one male was from fine art, and one was

from business management). Ethnicity included four white participants, two Black Caribbean participants, four Indian, one Pakistani and one Asian / White participant. The gender and ethnicity profiles are typical of the students studying fine art or a business management first degree course at the University. The participants are full-time students and are a mix of 1st, 2nd, penultimate and final year students and they were all aged between 18-24 years, studying a fine art or business management degree course. Fine art and business management students were chosen to take part in the research as students from both these degree areas struggle to achieve graduate level positions (Swani, 2016).

The choice of fine art and business management students for my sample was initiated through my professional practice. Staff performance (determined by the Senior Management at the University) is often judged on the number of graduates from the Host Organisation attaining graduate level work within six months after graduation. Business management and fine art graduates tend to struggle to secure graduate level employment. By understanding student career aspirations in both of these subject areas it may be possible for the Careers and Employment department within the University to develop structured support and activity to enhance the employment options for these students.

In selecting the sample, Academic Award Leaders were asked to recommend potential participants. To enable them to select appropriate participants they were given a brief that described the intended research and the criteria for selecting participants (see Appendix B). The criteria were to choose first-generation students on a business management or a fine art degree course, aged 18-24 years who are open and engaging. As indicated, the sample was never intended to be representative; rather it was selected to support a thoughtful and rich description of students' experiences and perceptions. Qualitative research aims to go deep rather than wide.

My Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation model is slightly different from the standard model (see Figure 1.0). The blue boxes are common practice when using ADPE. The green boxes are what I have introduced in the ADPE research process.



Figure 1:0 - Auto-Driven Photo-Elicitation Model

3.6.2.2 Eliciting photographs

The briefing sheets (Appendix B) were produced to encourage the Award Leaders to support this research. Highlighted on the briefing sheets were the potential benefits to the Award Leaders and their students from taking part in the research: *'the student / participant will benefit from taking part in my research by receiving careers advice (if they want it), a chance to find out about the employment services available to them and if the student hasn't already started to consider their career their interview and photographs will help the participants to explore their career aspirations and give them an understanding of where they are now on their career plan.'* The briefing sheet for the participants gives slightly different information to

that of the Award Leaders. The brief can be used by the participants to refer back to the task and to keep them focused on what is required of them. The brief also gives the participants deadline dates, the process, and the type of questions that will be asked during the interview. The briefing sheet will also give the participant an understanding of the research. This understanding is important as it will help participants to make an informed choice on whether to participate in the research (Cox et al., 2014; Faden and Beauchamp, 1986). The participants' brief also stressed the need to avoid close-up photographs of people without a signed consent form from the subject. Even with a signed consent form all photographs were checked by me and given ethical consideration in case subject and participant had overlooked a potential ethical issue.

A deadline was also set so the participants knew what was required of them and by when or the research could 'drag' on and would never be completed. The participants were not asked to name their photographs as I did not want to prejudge the photographs through their titles; however, after the participants' one-to-one interviews I named the photographs based on the participants' commentary. Finally, I informed the participants they had a choice of four levels of consent:

1. Authorise the use of any of the photographs
2. Authorise the use of any of the photographs with peoples' faces made anonymous
3. Specific photographs can be used
4. None of the photographs can be used

In addition to consent for using the photographs I also required consent to use the participants' verbal commentary extracted through the face-to-face interviews. "A key ethical consideration for all research is to minimise harm to participants while maximising the

benefits of the research” (Cox et al., 2014:10). For this reason, I was flexible and would have respected a participant’s decision if they wished to withdraw their consent of using certain images and stories. However, withdrawal of images or stories did not arise in this research. Participants were given the opportunity to check their interview transcripts for the purpose of verifying accuracy, correcting errors and inaccuracies and providing clarification or fresh thoughts by offering additional testimony. According to Skeggs (1994) letting participants read their transcripts is a way of “monitoring the legitimacy of the interpretations” (Skeggs, 1994:7). In the event very few of the participants chose to read their transcripts and no significant feedback was offered.

3.6.2.3 Interview process

One week after the research participants had submitted their six photographs a meeting was arranged in a pre-booked room within the Students’ Union. The room was bright and there was little chance of being disturbed during the ADPE interview. All interviews were carried out on a one-to-one basis. In the room a video camera was set up. The camera was not focussed on the participant, instead it was focussed on the participant’s six photographs laid out on a table. Many people can be put off talking naturally if they feel they are being filmed. The camera was used to pick up hand gestures if I or the participant decided to point at specific images. According to Williams, Herman and Bontempo (2013) the audio recorder is less intrusive than video recording. The images were placed in the order the participant had sent them to me via email. In addition, there was also an audio recorder placed near the participant to record the conversation. The video recorder was also recording the conversation. I used the video audio as a backup in case the main audio recorder stopped recording and as an aide-memoire for the images.

According to Gillham (2000) the interview should be videoed and audio recorded to provide an accurate record of what was said. Pink (2013:395) claims that videoed interviews allow participants to tell more of their story using not only words and photographs but also through gestures and body movement. Audio and video recordings allow a thorough examination of what the participant said and did. Bryman (2012) raises another key point:

...because the interviewer is supposed to be highly alert to what is being said – following up interesting points made, prompting and probing where necessary, drawing attention to any inconsistencies in the interviewee's answers – it is best if he or she is not distracted by having to concentrate on getting down notes on what is said. (Bryman, 2012:482).

I sat to the side of the participant to prevent the barrier of a table and so it would not feel too formal or too much like an interview which might be stressful for the participants. I also dressed less formally to my everyday attire to try and create a casual atmosphere and to try and encourage the participants to be open in their discussions and not see me as a member of management interviewing them.

After a brief introduction to the research the participants were asked to explain why they had chosen the six images. They could start at any image they wanted. Nearly all the participants, irrespective of subject studied, tended to start in chronological order, i.e. they started at an image that was focussed on their first year at university and then worked through the images until they reached the present day. The images appeared to give the participants structure through which they could articulate their thoughts.

Occasionally I asked a question to either clarify the participant's point, to redirect the conversation back to the focus of my research or to open up a new line of enquiry. Good prompts included: if you could, how would you have changed these images? Were there other photographs you wish you could have taken? and If you had to choose one photograph

which one would you choose that sums up your career aspirations? Choosing an image that summed up a participant's career aspiration was the only standard question I asked that sometimes proved difficult to answer. The reason may be that many of the participants were not yet focussed on any particular career aspiration. To the question if you could, how would you have changed these images? the business management participants rarely wanted to change their images and the fine art participants only ever mentioned showing an earlier piece of work to show how their art has developed. The question was there other photographs you wish you could have taken? covered several potential scenarios. Firstly participants may not have had access to a visual recorder when they saw the image they would have liked to have photographed (Mandleco, 2012). Secondly, according to Ziller and Rorer (1985) first-year students are often reluctant to photograph people due to shyness. Finally, Ziller (1990) and Clark-Ibáñez (2007) found that cultural factors could affect the choice of images taken. When I delved deeper, by asking questions related to the photographs, for example what does the image represent to you? and if you had been given this task in your first year what photographs do you think you would have taken? I tended to find there were correlations with what students were trying to emphasise (discussed in the findings and discussion chapter).

The prompt sheet I used for the interviews came partly from Cousin (2009:220-221).

1. Tell me about your photographs? – What does it depict? How does this image make you feel?
2. If you could how would you have changed these images?
3. Were there other photographs you wish you could have taken?
4. If you had been given this task in your first year what photographs do you think you would have taken?

5. If you had to choose one photograph which one would you choose that sums up your career aspirations?
6. Are there any further comments you would like to make about anything we have not covered?

Additional questions came from my evaluation of the images, as Pink (2013) states:

...viewing of photographs and videotapes as a basis from which to develop further questions for the research and for the informants...The analysis of such materials will then feed back into research, enriching the knowledge base upon which the project can proceed and inspire new questions. (Pink, 2013:370)

There was no discernible difference in how the business management or the fine art participants handled the ADPE process, except in one respect. Fine art participants nearly always showed an image of their art work. This image was usually replaced by a text book or some assignment-based image for the business management students. Though this difference seemed important, it did not seem to affect the quality of the interviews across the subjects.

3.6.2.4 Interview transcriptions

Not every researcher decides to transcribe their interviews with their participants; however, I felt it was an important stage in the research process for several reasons: firstly, doing the transcripts helps the researcher to become familiar with the interviews. Secondly, "It is faster to scan a paper document than listen to or view an interview," (Denzin and Lincoln, 2011:454). Thirdly, as Edwards (2001:320) writes, transcripts are a complex but necessary process, because "it is simply impossible to hold in mind the transient, highly multidimensional, and often overlapping events of an interaction, as they unfold in real time." In producing transcripts I included pauses and repetitions (Bailey, 2008) to capture the flavour of the

interaction. Where quotations and photographs were referred to pseudonyms were used to protect the participants' identity.

3.7 Method of data analysis

The literature review for this study found that although visual researchers have applied methods such as semiotics, thematic visual analysis, coding, sorting, mapping and content analysis to their visual data (Allen, 2012; Dockett and Perry, 2005; Drew, et al., 2010; Mandelco, 2012; Tremlett, 2013; Van Auken, 2010), there was little explanation on how this analysis was actually carried out. This is not a criticism of these researchers, as there may be several reasons for only including a brief note, including the limited word count when writing for journals and the methods may not be a primary concern in the study. I disregarded the use of semiotics as my intention was never to interpret the image or look for signs and symbols in this study. I also decided against using a software programme to support the coding and categorisation of the data for several reasons; firstly, the data set is fairly small and does not warrant a need for software to assist in the categorisation of the data and secondly, I prefer to handle the data. I concur with Cresswell, (2007) who states:

"...a computer program may, to some individuals, put a machine between the researcher and the actual data. This causes an uncomfortable distance between the researcher and his or her data." (Cresswell, 2007:165)

For this study, and similar to Drew et al., (2010) research I used some of the principles of grounded theory. Grounded theory allows concepts and categories to emerge from the data and the researcher is encouraged to approach the data without any preconceptions; however, this is difficult and many of the criticisms of grounded theory refer to the difficulties it poses for the researcher in not drawing from their knowledge, experience and from previous research (Dev, 1999). In addition, all research is guided by the questions asked by the

researcher. As Dey (1999:104) states: "Even if we accept the (doubtful) proposition that categories are discovered, what we discover will depend in some degree on what we are looking for." I recognise the categories are constructed by the researcher during the research process; however, I found my approach to the analysis enabled the treatment of data that does not fit ongoing theorisations as being equally as important as data that does. I applied four strategies from a grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) approach to data analysis. Firstly, I took an inductive approach by which I mean I set aside my research questions and examined the data for what it appeared to be saying. Secondly, I read each line of the data carefully and assigned it to emergent themes. Thirdly, I attached memos to my data; these were any comments or observations that I might make as I gathered the data or assigned themes. According to Glaser, memo-ing enables us to capture the "meaning and ideas for one's growing theory at the moment they occur" (Glaser, 1998:178). Schreiber and Noerager Stern (2001:72) state: "it is far better to get the idea down on paper than to lose it." This proved evident particularly at the theoretical level. This brings me to my fourth approach in that I looked for what Blumer (1954:34) calls 'sensitising concepts' (in Cousin, 2009) that might support an analysis of the data. These concepts emerge from the data analysis process; in the case of this enquiry, it came through in the search for common themes. Two conceptual approaches emerged as relevant in the data analysis process, Liz Beaty et al. (1992) Orientations to Learning framework and Wenger's (1998) Communities of Practice. Learning orientation is defined by Beaty, Gibbs and Morgan (1997:76) as "all those attitudes and aims which express the student's individual relationship with a course of study."

Orientation to study takes account of the conscious control of learners over how and what they study, and provides an holistic description of student's purposes for study. (Beaty and Morgan, 1992:3)

Beaty and Morgan, (1992) argue that a learning orientation supports our understanding of the personal decisions students make. They do not see orientations as innate qualities in the

student. Rather they see them as a product of interactions between students and the university. Students develop quite individual strategies at universities and these can be misunderstood by lecturers who may have a single way of interpreting student behaviour. They may, for instance, judge a student to be lazy because they have no way of understanding personal strategies or indeed the shifting orientations students experience over time. Beaty and Morgan (1992) conclude that students have complex reasons for being at university and the notion of orientations captures this. The similarities between learning orientation and career building orientation emerge from interviews with students. Through the data analysis, it became evident that the Orientations to Learning Framework offered a way of representing variation among student strategies. The data pointed to the close link between the building of the student career aspirations through the development of identity and belonging to a community. This, in turn, suggested the usefulness of Wenger's Community of Practice framework (CoP) to theorise my findings. These will be discussed in the next chapter.

As indicated, inductive data analysis requires looking at the data to see what it is saying regardless of the research questions. This requires a process of categorisation. Table 1.0 shows examples of how the comments from the participant were categorised. The participants' comments were grouped into common categories and sub-categories. Themes were formed at the second stage of the analysis.

| Categories | Sub-categories | Kam (pseudonym) |
|---------------------|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Language and Travel | | I am hoping that having a good degree will allow me to travel. I know that the university does an Erasmus scheme here, so I thought that would be an opportunity for me to travel...and then after that I would just like to go on to travel the world... |
| Work Experience | | Well I was working at McDonalds and can it get any better than this. I thought is this all I am doing just working at McDonalds. So I thought with a degree I could get better. |
| | Placement | I know for a job. I think you have to know everything. I felt with |





| | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | my placement year I was going in and they wanted me to know everything then I realised that everyone just goes along and nobody knows everything. They just go and try...But it has helped me realise that they just want your skills really and work hard. |
| Role Models and Influencers | | I remember a customer asking me "so is this just your part-time job and do you study as well and I remember thinking oh, no, I don't actually I just work here which made me think; I actually do want to go to university. |
| Aspirations and Ambitions | | I would like to graduate with a first. I am trying to work towards a first class degree. I think I would be a bit disappointed if I don't. |
| | No Aspiration | I kept them very general because I don't know what I want to do after graduation. |
| | No Aspiration | With business there is so much to choose from and that's when I get confused and I think what do I really enjoy? I am not sure what I really want to do. |
| | | Maybe after when I graduate I want to buy a house but that's not my main reason. It's more about myself and progressing myself more than the money side of it, but afterwards I would like to save and buy a house. |

Table 1.0 Example Taken from Kam's Transcript Highlighting the Categories and Sub-Categories

The categories (over 25 original categories and twelve sub-categories across the twelve transcripts emerged) were then split into five themes. Merriam (2009:197) describes the first stage as the data being "organised and refined rather than beginning data analysis." According to Cresswell (2007:152) and Merriam (2009) five to six categories (themes) is the ideal number of categories to work with. "A large number of categories is likely to reflect an analysis too lodged in concrete descriptions" (Merriam, 2009:187). Five themes were chosen because I wanted to "end up with a manageable number of core categories that seemed to capture what was going on" (Cousin, 2009:43).

Table 2.0 shows the development of the themes. According to Merriam (2009:185) the "categories should be mutually exclusive. A particular unit of data should fit into only one

category." The participant's photographs (images) were also included in the table to support the analysis.

| Image | Theme | Categories | Sub-categories | Kam (pseudonym) |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | Transformative University Experience and Dreams | Language and Travel | | I am hoping that having a good degree will allow me to travel. I know that the university does an Erasmus scheme here, so I thought that would be an opportunity for me to travel...and then after that I would just like to go on to travel the world... |
|  | Intrinsic Motivation | Work Experience | | Well I was working at McDonalds and can it get any better than this. I thought is this all I am doing just working at McDonalds. So I thought with a degree I could get better. |
|  | Extrinsic Motivation | | | I remember a customer asking me "so is this just your part-time job and do you study as well and I remember thinking oh, no, I don't actually I just work here which made me think; I actually do want to go to university. |
|  | Transformative University Experience | | Placement and Confidence | I know for a job. I think you have to know everything. I felt with my placement year I was going in and they wanted me to know everything then I realised that everyone just goes along and nobody knows everything. They just go and try...But it has helped me realise that they just want your skills really and work hard. |

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------|-----------------------------|---------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | Extrinsic Motivation | Role Models and Influencers | | I remember a customer asking me “so is this just your part-time job and do you study as well and I remember thinking oh, no, I don’t actually I just work here which made me think; I actually do want to go to university. |
| | Strong Sense of Direction | Aspirations and Ambitions | | I would like to graduate with a first. I am trying to work towards a first class degree. I think I would be a bit disappointed if I don’t. |
| | Weak Planning | | No Aspiration | I kept them very general because I don’t know what I want to do after graduation. |
| | Weak Planning | | No Aspiration | With business there is so much to choose from and that’s when I get confused and I think what do I really enjoy? I am not sure what I really want to do. |
| | Dreams | | | Maybe after when I graduate I want to buy a house but that’s not my main reason. It’s more about myself and progressing myself more than the money side of it, but afterwards I would like to save and buy a house. |

Table 2.0 Example Taken from Kam’s Transcript Highlighting the Categories, Sub-Categories,

Themes and Photographs

Eventually, a coding of the data exposed five 'career building' orientations and a cluster of themes associated with the university experience. This led to the key finding, namely the identification of five orientations to student career building in higher education. These are:

1. *A Strong Sense of Direction*, for example, students who join university with a career plan, and students who develop their career through practice and undertaking work experience whilst at a university.
2. *Intrinsic Motivations*, for example, passion for the subject.
3. *Extrinsic Motivations*, for example, wanting to make parents proud or achieving a degree.
4. *Weak Planning*, for example, students who have no career plans due to their self-perceptions and lack of confidence in their ability.
5. *Dreams*, for example, students who build their career plan around imagining they own specific objects or holding certain professional roles.

These were not found to be neat divisions, though the data revealed that participants appear to have one dominant orientation that influences their career building. Figure 2.0 shows the relationship between the five orientations.

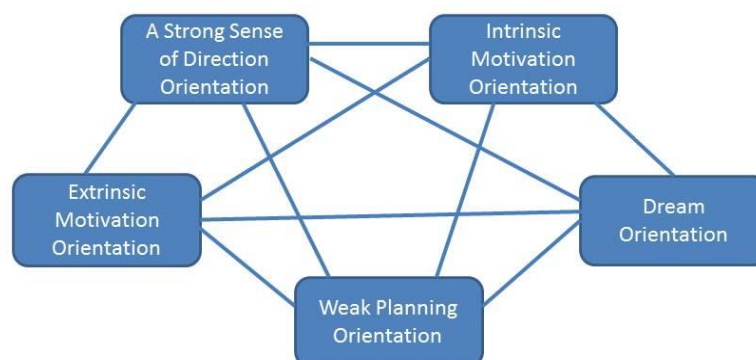


Figure 2.0 Five Orientations

The next chapter elaborates on this finding.

Chapter 4 – Findings and Discussion

4.1 Research Question 1 - What strategies do students use to develop their career aspirations in this research context?

As indicated in Chapter 3, my interviews revealed a set of five orientations to career building; these will form the basis of my discussion below. I do not suggest that these five orientations exhaust what can be said about career building; there may well be other orientations or indeed other ways of examining this question. I offer these five orientations as heuristic devices that are ways of approaching and interpreting the meanings students make of their university experience and their career aspirations. I hope these orientations have both explanatory and practical force. As stated in my introduction, ultimately, my aim is to produce useful knowledge for policy formation among careers officers and academics.

4.1.1 A strong sense of direction orientation

Students with a strong sense of direction orientation appear to know exactly where they are going in relation to their career. Two important factors emerged from this finding, namely the relevance of work experience and placements and the relevance of the concept of community of practice (CoP) in making sense of the importance of work-based learning. Many of the participants appear to have developed a strong sense of direction at university through their work experience or placement. Gbadamosi et al. (2015) found students who believed in themselves undertook a placement year and there was a positive relationship between self-efficacy and the development of career aspirations; however, all the participants I interviewed were not initially considering a placement year. It was through the encouragement of university employees that the participants decided to take a placement year:

I thought what have I got to lose, so I took on a placement year...She (Placement Officer) persuaded me to do a placement year." (Yasmin, Business Management)

I wouldn't have really looked at (organisation name) if it wasn't for the guys on the placements (Placement Officers) of the University. They were the ones that said why don't you have a look at it. It might be something you might be interested in. (Rachel, Business Management)

Rachel came to University with the intention of passing a degree. Her path of discovery, backed by her placement experience, appears to have given her a clearer career direction. Rachel now describes herself as "very career-focused." A similar experience was encountered by Yusef, who suggests his placement year was instrumental in developing his career aspirations. He describes himself as "career-minded." Students who had undertaken a placement year clearly had acquired a strong sense of direction at the end of the experience:

...my placement year in particular where I met with a lot of different people. So there was a lot of networking involved and through that you just get talking to people. You then become aware of all the different job roles... (Yusef, Business Management)

Typically, first-generation students do not think about their future until they have completed their degree and this may be one of the reasons why they do not consider taking a placement year. Undertaking a placement year is particularly valuable for students with a weak planning orientation and /or low self-efficacy:

I think it (placement) has definitely helped me. It has definitely built it (confidence), especially the placement where it has put me in positions where I have not been use to and put into positions where I don't feel comfortable and I have to do it because it is work. (Yasmin, Business Management)

I don't know what made me think you have to know everything before you go into a job which was why I was reluctant to apply really. But it has helped me realise that they just want your skills really and work hard. (Kam, Business Management)

According to Bandura (1994:71) "the most effective way of developing a strong sense of efficacy is through mastery of experiences". It would seem that such mastery is best

encouraged through work placement. A point reinforced by Edwards (2014:228) who found a work placement can have a positive impact on a student's self-efficacy "especially in relation to their confidence in making applications and/or attending interviews, and in articulating their skills and strengths." Lave and Wenger (1991) offer the notion of situated learning to account for work-based learning; in the first instance, such learning takes place as 'peripheral participation' as Hanks explains:

The student "is not gaining a discrete body of abstract knowledge which (s)he will then transport and reapply in later contexts. Instead (s)he acquires the skill to perform by actually engaging in the process, under the attenuated conditions of legitimate peripheral participation. This central concept denotes the particular mode of engagement of a learner who participates in the actual practice of an expert, but only to a limited degree and with limited responsibility for the ultimate product as a whole." (Hanks, 1991:14)

Over time, the student moves from legitimate peripheral participation to being a professional in the core of the community. Rachel is clearly making that journey; she has completed her placement year and is intending to return to the company as a Trainee Manager. Lave and Wenger (1991) would argue that Rachel is going through a process of identification with a profession to which she sees herself as belonging. This is not the only effect of work placement. Byrom and Aiken (2014) found that placement experience can clarify what a student does not want to do though not necessarily what they want to do. Byrom and Aiken (2014) sum this up:

Although the placement experience was positively experienced by most students it also highlighted for some that their career aspirations did not live up to their expectations. In these cases, students became aware of what they did not want to do, but were still unaware of what they might want to do. (Byrom and Aiken, 2014:275)

Trish, a fine art student, found the career she was intending to pursue was not as expected when she undertook work experience:

I suppose (pointing to photograph) this one I am doing an internship as well at the Art Gallery as part of one of my modules and it's in the curators department because I wanted to know more about it I knew that was one of the options for employment after my Art degree although I am under the understanding that you have to get MA and possibly PhD so I wanted to know about it so I did this internship and I am still doing it now and actually I am really disappointed because curator isn't what I always thought it was the role seems to have evolved over the years and it's just a project management role. (Trish, Fine Art)



Photograph 1.0 Art Gallery (Trish, Fine Art)

Trish uses an image of the art gallery (photograph 1.0) where she is carrying out her work experience to introduce her original aspiration of a career in curating, followed by the influence her work experience has had on her career direction. Trish continues:

I am a bit disappointed with the curator thing but I don't want to do that. Rather than me say I know what I want to do its easier to say that perhaps that's not what I want to do. (Trish, Fine Art)

The value of the work experience in Trish's case cannot be underestimated. Without the work experience she may have continued studying towards, and aiming for, a career that was not suitable for her.

Work experience or a placement year is one of the main elements that builds a strong sense of direction orientation and supports the change and development in the students' self-perception and self-efficacy. This change is often connected to the students' perception of their placement provider's attitudes towards them (Edwards, 2014). A placement provider who gives positive feedback can increase a student's self-efficacy as the student will believe through verbal encouragement they have the skills to achieve (Bandura, 1997). Work experience can increase students' self-efficacy through mastery of experience and social persuasion. The extent of the social persuasion is dependent upon the quality of the relationships that develop between the student and his or her placement (Wanberg, Welsh, and Kammeyer-Mueller, 2007).

Fine Art participants do not have the option of taking a placement year although some of my sample did undertake a couple of weeks' work experience as part of their degree course. This work experience appears to have had little or no influence on their career planning or aspirations; possibly due to the short period (a couple of weeks), which may not be enough time to develop a sense of belonging or to grow their professional identity at the placement.

Very little emphasis is placed on work experience as a way of learning in the art and design subject benchmark statement and this may be because art and design is about how to do

something, and this experience can generally be created in the art studio. The students who took part in Ball et al. (2010:xi) research “see creative education as a means of developing their potential and value ‘learning by doing’ through project-based enquiry” and not necessarily through set work experience. According to Christie (2016) the creative sector lacks structured pathways, which contributes to uncertainty for students and graduates on how to build their career.

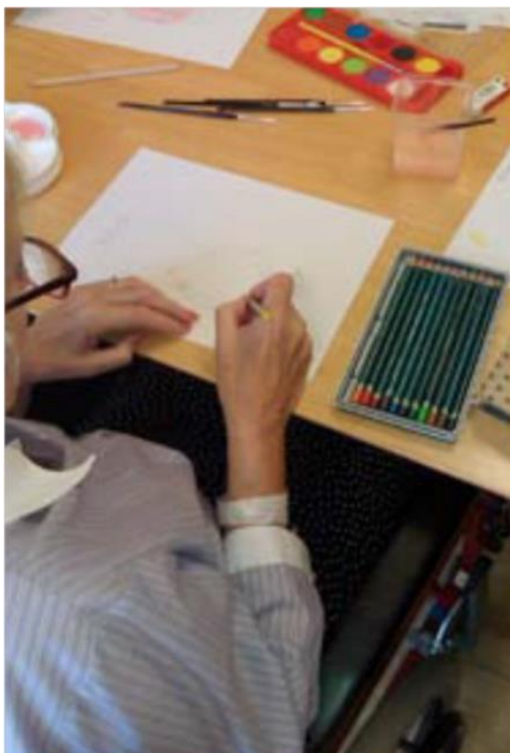
Some of the fine art participants want to start their own business to enable them to sell their work; however, the art and design subject benchmark statements do not include any aspect of self-employment. My findings are supported by Christie (2016) who found, in a recent study, that a number of graduates would have liked more help with how to approach the job market specifically learning about paying tax; pitching for business as a freelancer and more industry live projects. Ball et al. (2010:ix) found work placements and industry experience in the creative industries “are important pre-requisites for careers and significant for gaining experience and building work contacts.”

Although structured work experience opportunities are low for fine art students, there is the option of volunteering. Gurpreet, a fine art participant who undertook volunteering outside of her course, whilst at university, said:

Before I started my fine art course I wanted to become an Arts Therapist or pursue a career in that. So I thought it would be nice to get hands-on experience in a clinical environment...I think from experience of being initially wanting to do it (Art Therapy)...I think it's when you get there and talk to the people I am very engrossed in my own practice. It's a big leap for me to try and jump into Art Therapy. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

As in Gurpreet's case, many fine art students are willing to take unpaid work with 42% of art and design students undertaking voluntary experience since graduating (Ball et al. 2010a). My research concurs with Ball et al. (2010) research in that fine art students are not motivated by

money. The strategies fine art students develop to build their career aspirations are unlikely to be based on financial reward and more on intrinsic motivation. Photograph 2.0 (Art Therapy) represents Gurpreet's work experience in that it is artwork generated by a patient. This photograph and the quotation linked with this image "I am very engrossed in my own practice" alerted me to the difference between doing art for yourself and assisting / teaching others art. Learning of this difference as a volunteer may be why Gurpreet decided not to pursue a career in art therapy and to concentrate on her own work. I was able to draw out this direction by asking why she chose someone else's artwork rather than her own as the basis for our discussion.





Photograph 2.0 Art Therapy (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

Work placement as a student is not a prerequisite for a strong direction for students. Some students come to University with a clear career aspiration. Tammy, a fine art student, said:

I have been teaching from the age of thirteen years. I was a swimming instructor...I always felt that was what I wanted to do, to do teaching....I have done four years volunteering two days per week. I came to University because I knew I wanted to do teaching. (Tammy, Fine Art)

Tammy has used an image of a UCAS teaching advert to represent her career aspiration (photograph 3.0). When an image had a clear signification such as this, it was often linked to a strong sense of direction.

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Training programme

Training location

Modular

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Programme outcome

Accrediting provider

Second Subject

Decision

Offer text

N

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Higher education programme

Postgraduate

Conditional

This offer is subject to you obtaining

A satisfactory DBS & Health Check will be required. You must

pass the Pre-entry Prof. Skills Tests by 31/7/15.

You must

also achieve 2.1 degree & provide evidence of GCSEs in

English, maths & science at grade C+ by 31/7/15.

Firm

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Photograph 3.0 - Teaching Advert (Tammy, Fine Art)

4.1.2 Extrinsic motivation orientation

By extrinsic motivation I mean doing a degree for purposes that are outside of an interest in the subject. Extrinsic motivation according to Ryan and Deci (2000) is the motive that keeps individuals at a task by the application of external rewards. This does not signify no interest in

the subject, merely that this is accompanied by a strong sense of the extrinsic benefits of the degree, such as increased employability. This can be linked to a strong sense of direction. The business management participants appear to be more extrinsically motivated than the fine art participants. Yusef, a business management student said, "I think before university I wanted to earn a lot of money."

An important driver in my evidence centres on linkages between the aspiration to succeed and 'making parents proud'. These students have an eye on graduation day and the pleasures it will bring to parents but they also have an eye on the benefits of increased earning capacity, as with Harriet:

I said to my mam I'll build you a house one day...I think really I am doing it for me and also my family because they have all, my grandma and my mam have been through a lot, and I would like to give something back and build them a house. 'What did you get for Christmas?' 'My daughter built me a house.' (Harriet, Business Management)

Kam linked her prospective success to a family tragedy:

What initially motivated me to come to university was to make my mam and dad proud. My dad died, and I wanted to make him proud because I know that he would have wanted me to continue with my education. (Kam, Business Management)

Kam submitted an image with the words "one day, I will make you proud," (photograph 4.0).

When asked if she would have changed this or any other image, Kam stated that she would have strengthened the quote and made it more specific by saying "I will do this to make you proud."

Although Kam wants to make her parents proud, she also suggests she is driven by wanting to achieve a higher degree classification than her mother "I think it's because my mum got a 2:2 and she had four kids, and I thought if she can get a 2:2 I can get higher."



Photograph 4.0 – Proud (Kam, Business Management)

Making parents proud was cited particularly by the business management participants. This correlates with Leathwood and O’Connell (2003) research with first-generation students:

Most students gave a range of reasons, with the desire to make others, especially parents, proud emerging time and again in these students’ accounts.. (Leathwood and O’Connell, 2003:604)

The participants who identified good grades as the main motivator are, according to Beaty et al. (1997:74) defining success through their grades and there is always a “conflict between ‘getting the grade’ and ‘really learning something’.” Indeed, Ryan and Deci (2000) research on extrinsic motivation found once the grade is achieved this could lead to a lack of motivation to continue learning. This does not appear to be happening to the students taking part in my research.

Another extrinsic motivator centres on the perception that doors will be opened once a graduate:

I am hoping that having a good degree will allow me to travel. I know that the university does an Erasmus scheme here, so I thought that would be an opportunity for me to travel... (Kam, Business Management)

Extrinsic motivating factors, then, are about financial gain, making parents proud, securing a good degree and opening doors.

4.1.3 Intrinsic motivation orientation

I have adapted Beaty et al. (1997) Academic Orientation defined as being:

...characterised by students who are primarily interested in studying a particular subject 'for its own sake'. They are intellectually interested in the subject and are interested in studying at a higher level. (Beaty et al., 1997:78)

Similarly, I have taken Ryan and Deci (2000) definition of intrinsic motivation.

...the doing of an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for some separable consequence. When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external prods, pressure or rewards. (Ryan and Deci, 2000:56)

Three of the fine art participants commented on their enjoyment of art. Paris said "I have always liked art since I was little," Gurpreet, "I guessed I just enjoyed art in general, and Hannah "I enjoyed doing art." Having a passion for the subject is an intrinsically motivated orientation. Gurpreet's passion for fine art overcame the external pressures she was facing from her family to study pharmacy.

I was kind of pressured before University. My dad kept saying I think you should do pharmacy...it was no dad, no it's going to be Art...I think that was culture...They were just like Science, Science, Science. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

Harriet expressed her passion for business management:

This is something I am passionate about...that's what brought me to the university to do the Business side. It's all well and good having this idea, but you need to understand it in different countries. I can import... (Harriet, Business Management)

and John for fine art:

Since I was a small child, I have been addicted to graphics and video games and ever since then I wanted to pursue that passion which is why I took Fine Art. (John, Fine Art)

The image John uses to show his passion for art is images of aliens that he has drawn (see photograph 5.0 – Alien Sketches). He reinforces the relevance of this image by stating:

...it's what I have always liked drawing ever since I was a small child....I got so hooked on it. I have got a whole block of paper just scribbling you know. (John, Fine Art)



Photograph 5.0 – Alien Sketches (John, Fine Art)

John also implies that he has a strong sense of direction:

I have always known what I wanted to do. I have always known. It's always been my dream in a way. I have always wanted to do this ever since secondary school, so it's like I am really dedicated. (John, Fine Art)

And John is also showing elements of having a link with extrinsic motivation:

My mum and dad have been very supportive of me, and I wish to pay them back, hopefully, get a good job. (John, Fine Art)

The participants appear to have one dominant orientation that influences their career building, in John's case an Intrinsic Motivation Orientation. In addition, and to a lesser extent, one or more of the remaining four orientations also contribute to the participants' career building.

Intrinsic motivation can be about throwing yourself into the subject and into what it might produce. Amy cited Beckett (Worstward Ho (1983)) in her interview: "Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better." She explained:

He (tutor) always drummed that quote into me....the quote was basically the idea that - just go for it because even if it fails, it's not really a failure if you have tried and you can always use it as a stepping stone to what comes next. (Amy, Fine Art)

Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.

Samuel Beckett|

Photograph 6.0 – Quote (Amy, Fine Art)

While Paris certainly expressed passion, she appears not to be driven by a career connected to her art degree, and she is the only fine art participant who did not include a photograph of her artwork. Paris describes herself as 'passionate' about supporting mental health issues and

uses an image of the mental health stand she manned as an introduction to her volunteering experience and charity work (see photograph 7.0 - Marketing Stand).



Photograph 7.0 - Marketing Stand (Paris, Fine Art)

The lack of people in the image supports the view that Paris “can be really shy.” According to Paris “the Afro-Caribbean community have one of the highest incidences of it (mental health).” Paris is from the Afro-Caribbean Community and perhaps her photographs reflect her lack of social participation in art and the art community. Nearly all her photographs are of images outside of the art community i.e. photographs of the Students’ Union and Chaplaincy, accommodation, image of Birmingham and Nottingham.

I feel even though I am in the art block and I live on campus. I try and come here (Students’ Union) when I can, the students more on this side of campus I find they are more friendly than the art students because the art students are all segregated in that block, that big depressing block. (Paris, Fine Art)

This is clearly a form of distancing from her subject community; however, I have located her in this category because she is intrinsically motivated to pursue a career in mental health.

The Intrinsic Motivation orientation appears to be significant to the fine art participants, more than it is for the business management participants. The reason for this is students tend to choose to study fine art because they enjoy it, and have a passion about the subject. Students who chose to study art at University typically have done well in art in earlier education. Students who believe in their ability (art) tend to be motivated to learn more about the subject and have a desire to achieve more (Beaty et al., 1997; Schunk, 1991; Schunk and Pajares, 2002); in addition, they will continue to set themselves more challenging goals (Schunk, 1990) in art. Conversely, business management students tend to study business management for reasons other than being passionate about the subject. In addition, according to Buchanan, Kim and Basham (2007:293) business degree students are "strongly influenced by the motive to achieve professional advancement rather than the motive to acquire knowledge", whereas art students tend to be motivated by the acquisition of knowledge (Ball et al., 2010).

4.1.4 Weak planning orientation

Weak planning does not always imply a weakness; it aims to capture open-endedness although it is also about indecisiveness. Business management participants choose their subject because it is wide, and they do not need to specialise in a specific career path (associated with a weak planning orientation or a dream orientation); they can discover a path as they move through their degree programme. Three examples are Anna, Yasmin and Rachel, who chose business management because initially they were unsure what careers they wanted to pursue.

I didn't want to do anything specific but I knew business management was a very broad thing and I could go into everything. I could jump from one sector to another. (Anna, Business Management)

I chose to do business management and keep it broad. I wasn't sure what I was going to specialise in later down the line." (Yasmin, Business Management)

I picked Business Management in the hope that I would sort of be able to find a career root from there...and because it's so generalised I can take it from one to another. (Rachel, Business Management)

Paris is an example of a weak planner when it comes to making precise career decisions

although she knows the area she wants to work in. Paris knows she wants to work in mental health but struggles to be specific:

I can never be straight forward with things; I can be really indecisive, and it gets on my nerves...I do definitely want to do something...It needs a lot more thought. (Paris, Fine Art)

Similarly Anna:

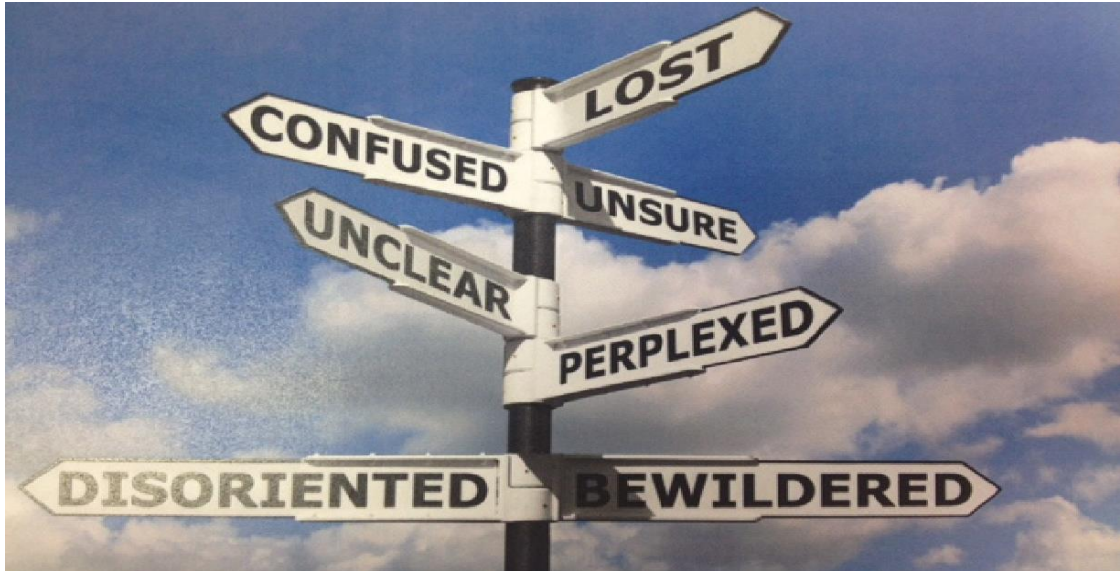
...at first I thought if I go to university I would do...nursing. Then I thought no...you are very secure at the end of it by the time you finish your degree. It wasn't something I was passionate about...I did sit down a few times to consider, do I want to do nursing or Business because I wanted to be a Barrister at first. (Anna, Business Management)

Confidence can be an issue for students who have a weak planning orientation (Bullock-Yowell et al., 2014). Yasmin, a penultimate year student from a widening participation background, chose to represent her career aspirations through Photograph 8.0. The image explicitly conveys confusion about which career direction she should take. She started her interview by saying:

I'll start with photograph 5 (photograph 8.0), this references how I felt when I first started. It represents my level four when I first started my degree. I was lost and confused. I wasn't clear what I wanted to do. (Yasmin, Business Management)

A Weak Planning orientation may change. Yasmin is starting to shift orientation. Yasmin talks about her lack of confidence but also of being capable:

I don't feel confident at all and that's one of my barriers I have to overcome. I know I am capable, but I don't feel as confident as I should do and I have to stop feeling negative and putting myself down and praise myself a bit more. (Yasmin, Business Management)



Photograph 8.0 - Confusion (Yasmin, Business Management)

A lack of confidence is often linked with confusion and is particularly noticeable with first-generation students (Armstrong and Sansom, 2012). An explanation given by Christie et al. (2008) for this state of mind is that the student's learning environment is no longer familiar. Yasmin's weak planning orientation began to shift with a realisation that a placement was key:

After I attended multiple lectures I realised work experience was key and I thought I haven't got substantial work experience...so I took on a placement year. (Yasmin, Business Management)

Yasmin finally discusses the influence the university has had on the change in her career aspirations:

...second year I would say things have changed when I got influenced by classes and doing a placement. My mind-set has completely changed how I am looking at it. At first, I was just going to get any degree, just pass, but now I am aiming for a first or 2:1, I just want a higher degree, and my prospects have changed a lot now. (Yasmin, Business Management)

The key reason for developing students' confidence according to Lent, Brown and Larkin (1986) is students with low or a weak sense of self-efficacy tend to limit their career goals; they fear that there is little chance of them achieving their specific career aspirations. This is why grade feedback is an important driver:

As the degree has gone on I realised how much confidence it (university) has given me...Some of the grades I have got have contributed confidence. I have geared myself up and I really, really want a first. (Kam, Business Management)

Throughout my first semester, my grades were getting me down a little. I was in the 50s and 60s which isn't good enough for myself...but this just turned around and made me feel really motivated. It was different from just assessment writing, and it shows, you know, what you can do and the changes you can make. (Rachel, Business Management)

Business management participants encountered a shift in confidence after receiving a couple of good module grades. This transition normally takes place during the student's second year of their degree course. Several of the business management participants cited the Enterprise module (focused on raising money for charity) as a key module to raising their confidence. Students who experience enterprise and entrepreneurship can increase confidence as discussed by the QAA (2018) in their *Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Guidance*:

Learning about and experiencing Enterprise and Entrepreneurship while at university can have several benefits. It gives students alternative perspectives on their career options and ultimately, the confidence to set up their own business or social enterprise. Enterprise competencies will be useful to those in employment, or those who become self-employed and work on a freelance or consultancy basis. It can help develop a 'can-do' confidence, a creative questioning approach, and a willingness to take risks, enabling individuals to manage workplace uncertainty and flexible working patterns and careers. (QAA, 2018:3)

Confidence building is important to students because once a student's confidence starts to grow and students begins to recognise their skills and the knowledge they have acquired they appear to be motivated to achieve more, as Rachel reported after achieving a good grade; she

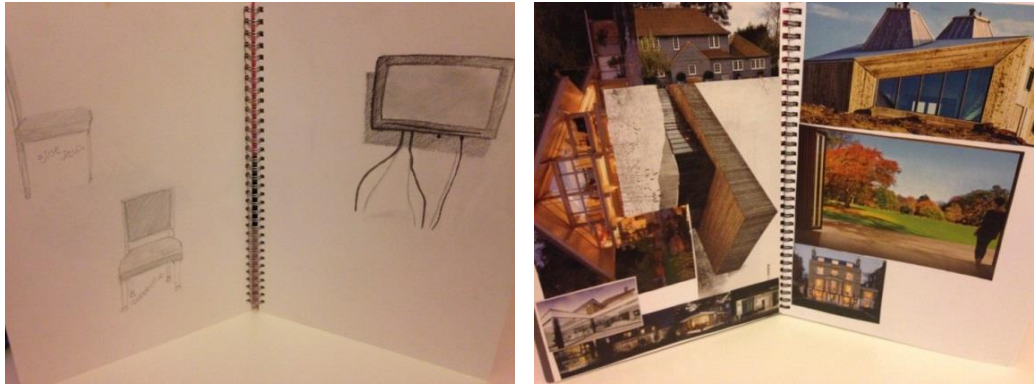
said it "made me feel really motivated." The student's aspiration may start to develop after achieving a good grade and the student's orientation may start to shift. Kam said:

The reason I want a first-class is because I know business management is so competitive and it's so broad. If you are just one of those business management graduates it will be harder for me to get into a career. (Kam, Business Management)

The Weak Planning orientation might be associated with the first year. Interestingly, my research findings show that a Weak Planning orientation is particularly associated with the business management participants. This maybe because career options are not clearly defined in business management; it is more open-ended than fine art.

4.1.5 Dream orientation

The fifth orientation is the Dream Orientation. Students with a dream orientation tend to imagine themselves in specific jobs. This dream enables the student to see themselves in a different context and creates the belief they can achieve what they desire. Often they imagine the steps required to achieving their goal, making it appear realistic and reachable. Harriet appears to have come to university with a strong sense of direction and with a dream element. She spoke of starting her own business. She discusses the business management course as being "dull, so dull. I want to get pretty fabrics and stuff and sewing and things." Harriet suggests the TV programme *Grand Designs* is a huge inspiration to her career direction (design and build houses). The photographs Harriet produced were of her sketch book and scrap book. Several of the images in her scrap book were images taken from the TV show *Grand Designs*, a programme based on the realisation of images (see photograph 9.0).



Photograph 9.0 - Sketch Book and Scrap Book (Harriet, Business Management)

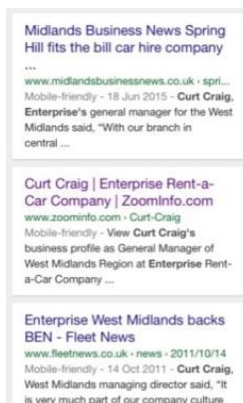
Some of the business management participants more so than the fine art participants seem to be driven by a materialistic desire where they dream of owning high powered cars and large houses, for example Rachel said:

I always drive past and think yeah I am going to live there one day and she (mum) would say 'oh yeah and how are you going to afford that' and I would say trust me I will. I'll get there I may be a bit older, but I'll get there. (Rachel, Business Management)

The following images are taken by the business management participants, suggesting a dream orientation.



(Rachel - owning a car and making money)



(Rachel -securing a manager position)



(Harriet – self build a house)

Photographs 10.0 - Dream Images (Business Management Students)

The first image is the dream of owning material items and is linked with Rachel's comments above. The second image signifies the dream of holding a management position. The fact that the third image, namely, the creative dream of building a house, is taken from a page in Harriet's sketch book adds to the sense of a dream waiting to take shape. The art of visualising yourself being successful in a given situation can develop a positive feeling of self-efficacy which can increase the chances of being successful. However, according to Williams (1995) imagining doing something well is not as strong an influence on self-efficacy as actual experience, yet the dream orientation appears as though it might be an important strategy to students developing their career aspirations. Rachel found she could relate her current position to her manager's position when he first started his career; she dreams of the same success:

I want to be successful and earning a lot of money...I want to be well known as well for all the right reasons within the career world. He (role model) is my ambition to get up to that level. (Rachel, Business Management)

Dreaming of owning material items changed over time for Yusef:

I think before university I just wanted to earn a lot of money...I just wanted any sort of item or object to associate with a materialistic lifestyle. Now my aspiration stays the same but...it's not for myself anymore it's for other people I want to help. (Yusef, Business Management)

Dreams are valuable ways of using the imagination, as Wenger notes:

Imagination is thus an important source of identification, one that takes the process beyond engagement in a variety of ways. Indeed, beyond engagement, identification depends on the kind of picture of the world and of ourselves we can build. (Wenger, 1998:194)

4.2 Research Question 2 - What factors might contribute to a rich learning environment for career building?

Each of the orientations shed some light on how students approach career building. Clearly, strong planning and 'dreams' are to be encouraged. Intrinsic motivation cultivates love of the subject but not necessarily planning, and extrinsic motivation needs to have elements of the intrinsic if learning is to be sustained. Finally weak planning is not necessarily counter-productive though care has to be taken if it remains an orientation into the final years of undergraduate life. Orientations are about personal strategies. I now turn to the second part of my inquiry which centres on the teaching and learning environments of both subjects and in what ways they support student career building. My data pointed to the following enabling factors: subject and professional identity which encompasses community and belonging, group activities, friendships and social events, communal learning space, significant others (family, mentors and peers) and active student-centred learning in the curriculum design.

4.2.1 Subject and professional identity

Figure 3.0 draws on Wenger's (1998) social theory of learning in attempting to capture students' visual representations of four discernible sources of professional identity formation. The first concerns identity through being. For Wenger, learning and being are intertwined in professional identities once you have made a transition from studying, for instance, photography to being a photographer. The second is identity through self-discovery. The third source concerns identity through activities that are akin to peripheral participation in a professional community. Finally the fourth source addresses belonging, an important insight from Lave and Wenger (1991), and concerns the informal and cultural aspects of community

life. It is not enough to have technical capabilities, it is important to take part in the subcultural life of a community of practice, to feel part of it.



Figure 3.0 - Students' Visual Representations of Four Sources of Professional Identity Formation.

4.2.1.1 Identity through being

In Wenger's (1998) view professional identity formation in the world of work comes through active and close participation in the relevant professional community. In my inquiry it would seem that this formation can apply to becoming a student. This is tied into student identification with the subject they are studying. Thus there seems to be a link between fine art students developing their career plans in art once they have established their artistic identity:

I went from doing very safe kind of portraiture paintings in my first year...the start of my second year that was when I really started to find my sort of niche. I started to hone my practice then it went from being someone who does art to someone who owns an arts practice. (Amy, Fine Art)

Amy is clearly moving from a student studying art to becoming an artist. Similarly, Tammy talks of shifting her positioning from studying art superficially to claiming a deep personal identification with doing art:

I feel I was going through the motions. I didn't really understand the work I was doing to the level I feel I am at now. There is more depth to it all. (Tammy, Fine Art)

Gurpreet makes a similar point in the language of self-development as work in progress:

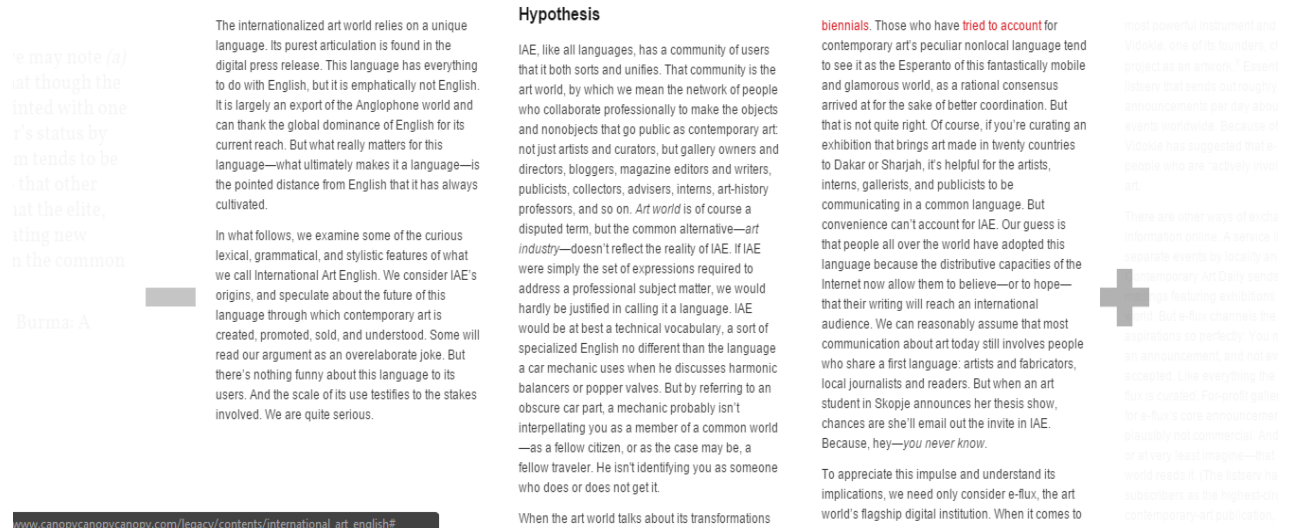
They (tutors) don't persuade you to fit into a practice. It's more of finding yourself within your practice. I don't want to say I found myself but I am developing and progressing, and I am still finding myself. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

Amy too is suggesting a movement (encouraged by the university) from studying art to being an artist:

I want to deal with something huge that I hadn't considered before - education and the learning gap between...secondary school level and going to University. So for her (role model) it was doing a foundation year...it was that bridge for her...like my, portraits in the first year to understanding what fine art isit's that idea, that the ideas in fine art like the interpretation and understanding...aren't really introduced at any point in education before you get to University... (Amy, Fine Art)

It seems that fine art students readily identify with being a university student as well as identification with being an artist. As I later discuss, for the business management participants the story was different, they appear to focus on developing a university student identity before considering developing their professional (work) identity.

Photograph 11.0 is taken from Amy's assignment which explores the transition from formal education to university.



Photograph 11.0 - Assignment (Amy, Fine Art)

4.2.1.2 Identity through self-discovery

A number of participants valued the university experience as a means by which they changed personally. Indeed, arguments for the value of undergraduate higher education often rest on claims that university is a transformational experience (Watson, 2012). In Gurpreet's case this was about independence and maturation:

I think university matures you a lot and the friendships you make and the relationship you have with your tutors. It just matures you, and I am very independent...I feel all grown up when I say that. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

For Yasmin, University was felt to be instrumental in developing her confidence:

I think it (university) has definitely helped me. It has definitely built it (confidence) especially the placement where it has put me in positions where I have not been used to. (Yasmin Business Management)

Yasmin has gone through a transformative experience and appears to recognise the role the university will play in developing her career. She used photograph 12.0 –My University to represent her transformative experience:

I took it (photograph 12.0) because coming to university was building my foundation...It's...the opportunity to make the most of my career. (Yasmin, Business Management)



Photograph 12.0 – My University (Yasmin, Business Management)

For Amy it was about ‘finding yourself’:

I have become that person who has become me. I mean it's knowing that. Not only have I come to a conclusion to solve my own problem but that I can help others who might have otherwise struggled going into Art School education. (Amy, Fine Art)

For Yusef, university broadened his horizons:

I have always wanted to travel but not in the sense I want to now. I wanted to travel to more extravagant and interesting places....but now I want to see more historic sites with more meaning and tradition. I think it was through different lecturers opening my mind rather than the perception you have before you came to university and reading different books. (Yusef, Business Management)

What factors created these opportunities for self-discovery and change? It seems that these concern identification with the subject studied and a sense of belonging to the university and the subject community.

4.2.1.3 Identity through belonging

According to Wenger (1998), we all belong to one community of practice; this might be active membership of a golf club or it might be a work-based community. Unlike a network or even a team a community of practice is defined by boundaries and shared enterprise. The fine art students talked of participation in a subject-based community. This participation took a number of forms from friendship-making to co-working in a shared space. Thus several fine art students offered evidence of belonging to a like-minded community with similar interests where they can share and discuss ideas. For example in one of the photographs the art students are on a group visit to an art gallery (see photograph 13.0).

A community of practice is often differentiated as having some form of expertise. The commentary attached to this photograph suggests the fine art participant sees a boundary between art students and the general public. She makes 'us and them' comments at a Light Show which was held in London and was externally run from the University; this show brings the 'general public' including art students and art practitioners together:

I realised this show the everyday world was really enjoying it. Like there was students like us and who were clearly involved in the art world there and standing there and analysing it and reading the wall text and stuff and also parents with their kids and the kids were running around screaming and were so happy...They could enjoy it for what it was other than a piece of art to analyse. (Amy, Fine Art)



Photograph 13.0 - Light Show (Amy, Fine Art)

Amy spoke of the lack of understanding everyday folk had to art compared to somebody who has studied the subject:

It might not mean that they (everyday folk) don't like art they might not get it the same way as somebody who has done their degree in it. (Amy, Fine Art)

In my inquiry fine art students saw the art studios as the locus of community participation.

This space appears to act as a safe place where students feel protected and where they are able to take risks in their art work and to secure peer support. The following comment from Tammy testifies to the importance of this space which she describes as "like a little home":

We stay in our building, and we never leave, and that's what we will do. We may go to the library to collect some books, and then we go. For us our building has that space. So

you can't really see this but it's like a little home, made for ourselves, we stay late, we order pizza. It's good really but you need that for an arts one (degree). (Tammy, Fine Art)

Not all the fine art participants feel as though they are part of the art community developed within the university. These students typically resist career building in fine art and tend to follow a similar route to that of the business management participants. Some might work towards creating an identity as a university student, through looking for communities to join outside of art. Others might keep a distance from subject identity through following an alternative dream orientation or through the drive for material ownership.

Student disaffection reduces subject identification. For instance, Paris initially gives the impression that she does not belong, or has an identity connected with the art students in her class. Her development is in a negative relation to art, at least initially. She is now considering roles that relate to what she appears to have enjoyed at University:

There was an off-site exhibition in the second year where you had to find a place to exhibit, and we had to produce promotional material...I think that was one of my biggest influences. (Paris, Fine Art)

Similar alienated experiences were encountered by Gurpreet and Amy:

I was actually at...for a week, and I guess I didn't fit. I felt a bit alienated...when I was trying to engage the lecturers they just didn't really engage in the conversation and at my interview here it was very enthusiastic and happy... (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

Amy left her original course due to a lack of interaction with her tutors:

I did three months of a Foundation Course before I came here and did fine art. I left. It was so awful and tedious, and I hated the teachers...The tutors there in those three months hardly knew me. I don't think any one of them even knew my name. (Amy, Fine Art)

Fine Art students appear to withdraw from their course due to a lack of personal support from academics and support staff (Yorke and Longden, 2008). In contrast, business and administration students tend to withdraw from their course due to a lack of personal engagement in the subject (Yorke and Longden, 2008). Yasmin, a business management student, left her original course after one of her tutors said:

...if you don't know anybody in Media you can forget it now. Nobody goes into it without knowing people and having networks and it's quite hard to get into. I kind of felt disheartened. (Yasmin, Business Management)

In contrast to Yasmin's experience above, other business management students seem to develop their identity, first as a university student and then as a professional aligned to a particular career. Moreover, Business management students also appear to access their learning differently from that of fine art students; the latter look to their peers and tutors for support and guidance. However, business management participants do not always appear to join communities of practice and they appear to be unaware that academic integration could be important to developing their self-confidence at university. Instead many of the business management students who took part in this research tried to build self-confidence in isolation with minimum support from either their tutors or social support from peers. Wenger (1998) infers that students need:

...places of engagement...materials and experience in which to build an image of the world and themselves" and they also need "ways of having an effect on the world and making their actions matter. (Wenger, 1998:271)

Despite social spaces being made available in the university, many of the business management participants appear to attend class and leave the university immediately afterwards without participating in activities for social integration; this could be due to work and family commitments. This action is typical of students from a widening participation background who often have to juggle their lives with other commitments (Leathwood and

O'Connell, 2003). That said, fine art students are also from a widening participation background but their degree course appears to be more geared to social interaction with peers and lecturers in class. A lack of social engagement in the university may inhibit communities of practice forming which may in turn have a detrimental effect on the development of the students' career aspirations.

Interestingly none of the business management students offered photographs of their peers or friendship groups whereas a number of the fine art students submitted photographs of their friends or befriending activities. Indeed a number of fine art students identified friendships as critical to their success at university and beyond:

If I didn't have friends I would probably struggle I guess I need a lot of positivity because I feel better that way when everybody is happy. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)

And Amy said of the friends she had made:

I really felt like I had made friends for life. I don't want to lose touch with them after uni. That was the point when it was set in stone we were genuine friends. (Amy, Fine Art)

To represent friendship Amy submitted photograph 14.0. The image does not show people; instead, the photograph is of sweets, playing cards and games and suggests an after party atmosphere. Amy confirmed during the face-to-face interview the photograph was taken during the fine art students Christmas party.

Most of the fine art participants showed pictures of their art peers or referred to them through depicted abstract images (see photograph 14.0). The relevance of the participants' images and the importance the art community was to them in supporting and guiding each

other emotionally through University became apparent through the number of images submitted by the fine art participants which had an emphasis on friendship.



Photograph 14.0 - Art Community Representation (Amy, Fine Art)

The drawn images on the whiteboard chosen by Tammy (photograph 15.0) represent classroom friends many of whom are holding hands suggesting the closeness amongst fine art students. The friends in the drawing have been given affectionate nicknames or family positions to represent their role in the art group, for example, blonde bombshell and uncle. The person dubbed uncle refers to a mature, male art student. The photograph stresses the friendship and closeness between the art students. Revealingly they have entitled the image *'our family.'*

In addition to friendship and closeness, social persuasion, for example encouragement from peers is identified as a major source of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) and this encouragement and a sense of belonging can feed into the creation of the students' career aspirations.



Photograph 15.0 - Whiteboard (Tammy, Fine Art)

Moreover, as a community, the fine art participants appear to be learning from each other; this learning was feeding into their career aspirations. However, as a community of friends they were not creating each other's initial aspiration; instead, they supported each other emotionally and helped develop classmates' aspirations once that initial idea or aspiration was created. For example, Tammy spoke of the advice she has given to several fine art peers who were interested in pursuing a career in teaching. Tammy considers herself as knowledgeable on the teaching profession. Tammy's mother is a teacher who studied a fine art degree and has been through the process of securing a teaching position. Tammy may feel she has the knowledge to pass on information to other students because of her mother's teaching background. According to Greenbank (2011) friends can play a significant role in a person's decision-making. From my findings, I would argue friends can play a major role in a person's decision-making (especially with fine art students) but only if part of that decision has already been reached beforehand. I found that the role of friends is similar to the role adopted by first-generation students' parents and that is to offer emotional support rather than to give

advice and guidance (Greenbank and Hepworth, 2008). Yusef describes the support from his family as follows:

At first, when you move out it can be a bit daunting. So just having the comfort of home and my mam teaching me how to cook and sending me little food parcels. (Yusef, Business Management)

The support is emotional and practical not advice orientated. Emotional support also comes from his friends:

...being there when the going gets tough and being there to chill out and giving the mind a rest that it needs sometimes. (Yusef, Business Management)

When you are applying for graduate schemes it is an exhausting process. It is quite a lengthy recruitment process you go through and, of course, you are not going to get accepted at each one. So taking rejection is quite daunting, so you need a good support system around to keep you motivated. (Yusef, Business Management)

However, friends do have the potential to hold back a person:

I think a lot of my friends were pulling me down. You know can you help me with this; can you help me with that...I don't think they (classmates) had much influence on me as such. They caused more stress than anything else. (Yasmin, Business Management)

Data gathered from the fine art participants indicates that university encourages friendship.

However, the business management participants did not refer to their friends as having the same importance to their development as the fine art participants nor did they dwell on the importance of friends to them in constructing their aspirations. In addition, the business management participants rarely showed images of friends nor did any of their images suggest friendship which the fine art images did. This seems to suggest that the business management students' path of self-discovery can be individual more so than the fine art students whose self-discovery may be more collective.

The business management participants also do not appear to seek advice from each other, nor do they appear from their images or comments to be very close to their class colleagues.

The fine art academic staff seem to be supporting and developing the students with an intrinsic motivation orientation by working with students who have a passion for art through the development of an art community. Two of the participants submitted the following image which again supports the importance the fine art participants place on friendship:

This was Christmas (photograph 16.0) so we were highly pressured to do our dissertation so we thought we would celebrate before and after our dissertation. (Gurpreet, Fine Art)



Photograph 16.0 - Christmas Party (Gurpreet and Tammy, Fine Art)

The fine art participants' identity appears to be created through belonging to a community, built with like-minded students through their passion for the subject. It does not appear from the business management students' photographs or verbal explanation that belonging to a

community in class is as important to them as the fine art participants. The business management students rarely appear to interact together, unless they are set a group assignment. This maybe because of the intrinsic motivation that many fine art students possess i.e. they have a common passion for the subject and the way the curriculum is developed encourages group work, for example, according to the QAA Art and Design Subject Benchmark Statements:

Studio-based activity is a significant feature of art and design education, providing locations for both individual and group tuition. In an effective learning environment, staff and students create a community of practice as partners in the process of learning. The pedagogy is discursive with an emphasis on student presentation, peer group learning, workshops and group critique. Both individual and group tutorials are an important approach, providing a supportive environment for the student and encouraging reflective learning... (QAA, 2017:10)

Conversely, business management students are not always in the same class together as they have a choice of optional modules they can take. The QAA business and management subject benchmark statements place less emphasis on peer group learning and communities of practice than do art and design:

Teaching methods and situations are appropriate and supportive, inclusive in design and engage students. They need to take account of the diverse learning and teaching cultures that students may have experienced and provide opportunities for students to understand and appreciate the global context in which they will be operating. They may include face to face, blended or distance learning and make good use of supporting technology to aid student learning. Independent of mode of delivery, teaching in business and management includes some combination of: lectures, seminars, workshops, field work, work-based learning including placements and internships, employer or organisation-based case studies, live or 'real world' projects, guided learning, study trips, simulations, practicals, discussion groups, virtual forums, business mentoring, business start-up. (QAA, 2015:10)

Some business management students seek support and advice from other sources than classmates and this is usually from friends they have made in the halls of residence. The support from halls of residence friends tends to be emotional support and can be very different from the support given by classmates especially for fine art students where the

support is more advice orientated. According to Wilcox et al. (2005:718) “...living in halls facilitates social support during the early stages of the transition to university.” And it is this transition to university that helps students develop their identity as a university student. Yusef uses photograph 17.0 as an introduction to his friends in the halls. He talks about them bouncing off each other which suggests there may be an element of support:

So that picture there. This one here was my accommodation whilst I was studying. That picture there mainly summarises my friends and the people I have met and as students we are quite a tight-knit bunch and they are quite career driven and have high aspirations so we bounced off each other and we are in the same environment to help and you do the best you can. (Yusef, Business Management)



Photograph 17.0 - Accommodation (Yusef, Business Management)

In the second year of the business management degree course a group module is introduced where students have to work together to successfully complete the module.

According to Matheson and Sutcliffe (2017):

Curriculum design and delivery that aided their (students) transition, promoted belonging and empowered them (students) as learners, leading to transformational change. (Matheson and Sutcliffe, 2017:15)

Four of the six business management participants mentioned how important the Enterprise module (group work) was to their development. Their confidence and motivation grew and their aspirations developed through this module. The module was also one of the students' first modules where they have had to network and become an active part of a community. Previously some of the participants appear to have been sitting at the margins of their subject community:

...certain modules and certain group work it was good to get involved with different people in different groups. I am not the sort of person who sits with people. I tend to switch off...We did an enterprising module and that kind of got the feeling of the business side of things, and it was kind of exciting. (Yasmin, Business Management)

Rachel submitted an image of the group that worked on the module together (photograph 18.0) and commented on how well they had done and how it made her realise what she could achieve:

It's a picture of me and my uni friends (photograph 18.0) and we raised money for Compton Hospice in one of the modules in my second year and I think that pushed me a lot because you know...what I can do and we made £2,000 which is a lot of money...We ended up with a really good grade. I think we got 94% if I remember rightly which is brilliant. (Rachel, Business Management)

The QAA (2018) *Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education: Guidance for UK Higher Education Providers* is not specific to any particular degree programme or subject specialism and it should be read in conjunction with the appropriate QAA Subject Benchmark Statement. The enterprise module in the Business and Management curriculum appears to have taken some of the elements of the QAA (2018) guidance to develop enterprise behaviours; namely,

taking initiative, making things happen, communicating, taking responsibility, networking, personal effectiveness and managed risk taking. The development of enterprise attributes is important to the student's development in relation to building self-efficacy, flexibility, adaptability, determination and resilience (QAA, 2018:9). Through the enterprise module students appear to shift from just 'receiving' knowledge to where they are actively involved, and thus develop their understanding through participation working alongside peers.

Photograph 18.0 is the only image (submitted by Rachel) or any of the other business management participants with reference to peers and friends.



Photograph 18.0 - Raising Money for Charity (Rachel, Business Management)

Elements of a community of practice within the Business Faculty only appear to begin to form when students are placed into group work. The final section I will discuss is identity development through peripheral participation.

4.2.1.4 Identity through peripheral participation

Central to Lave and Wenger's (1991) concept of a community of practice is its composition of 'old timers', 'newcomers', and 'peripheral participants'. In terms of the latter, peripheral participation means something like participation as an apprentice or an intern. I have taken a broader definition of peripheral participation to account for student connectivity with the workplace. This includes work placements, volunteering and mentoring schemes.

It is not always easy for students to gain peripheral participation access to communities of practice. Therefore I have subsumed to this category activities and people who support students to gain access to communities of practice. They function as a bridge or a mediator. For instance, sometimes family members, role models and tutors perform this function.

Gurpreet appears to have a vague notion of what she wants to do and she expressed to me her reliance on the university to provide ideas through guest speakers and to suggest opportunities that she could apply for; "I am struggling right now deciding what to do. I can only know this by going to talks." (Gurpreet, Fine Art) Whereas Paris is relying on her mentor provided by the university to help develop her future steps:

We have put together a personal development plan, and we have talked about my career aspirations as well, and I have analysed a lot of things. (Paris, Fine Art)

The business management participants also appear to rely on mentors to help develop their career plan:

The Institute of Directors Mentoring scheme in my final year has been fantastic...I have spent a lot of time with (named mentor) just improving my interviews...he has been

there for professional advice and has helped me along the way and we have achieved the plan. (Yusef, Business Management)

The University's Institute of Directors Mentoring scheme to which Yusef refers was developed to support students with their career development and plans.

An inspirational account of a career can inspire a student. Yasmin was enthused about a career in human resources by a guest lecturer:

I found her career so intriguing how her career worked out. I felt I could relate to her because I started off doing something completely different before business and that was quite an eye opener. (Yasmin, Business Management)

Clearly a single lecture, or mentor relationship are thin forms of work-associated activity but they should not be underestimated for their potential or importance. Wenger (1998:277) refers to "lived authenticity" suggesting that students need "...access to experience in order to feel connected to a subject matter." These thin forms of association can begin to make that connection. The mentoring scheme run by the Business School can give the students access to work-related experience. In the case of fine art students they are fortunate to have art lecturers who are practising artists. According to Thornton (2013):

It is common for fine art lecturers (and for many other art specialists) in higher education in the United Kingdom to be productive artists as a prerequisite of employment. (Thornton, 2013:49)

And according to Wenger (1998):

...being an active practitioner with an authentic form of participation might be one of the most deeply essential requirements for teaching. (Wenger, 1998:277)

Amy, a fine art student, started her degree course with no specific career plan. The University took Amy on a three year journey of discovery ("I went through a lot of experiments") and it

was through meeting an art professional, external to the university, but connected, through one of her assignments that she developed a career direction:

If you asked me before Christmas I would have said I haven't got a clue, but my interview with Sarah Blackwell (pseudonym) really helped me figure out what I wanted to do. My plan is... (Amy, Fine Art)

Witnessing other people successfully completing a task is an important source of self-efficacy, and according to Bandura:

Seeing people similar to oneself succeed by sustained effort raises observers' beliefs that they too possess the capabilities to master comparable activities to succeed...the impact of modelling on perceived self-efficacy is strongly influenced by perceived similarity to the models. (Bandura, 1994:3)

Sarah's values and career direction resonated with Amy's own values and the direction she aspires to take. This is what has made a good mentor relationship. Similar resonances in terms of factors such as ethnicity, gender and social background can play a part in successful mentoring. If a student does not feel they have any resonances then their behaviour is rarely influenced (Bandura, 1994).

The close connection many students may have with their family, from circulating in the same communities, can influence students' career aspirations. According to Saleem et al. (2014) parental influence on student career aspirations may be the result of the following factors: some students follow their parents' profession or trade because it is familiar to them. There is also the parents' endorsement and professional life style, which can sometimes be the reason for selection of a similar profession.

Consistent with prior research (Bandura et al., 2001; Saleem et al., 2014) I found a positive relationship between family support and the development of aspirations, teacher support and the development of self-efficacy, motivation and career aspirations.

Family can also influence student aspirations. Rachel's and Yasmin's career driver may have been instigated by their family by learning through observation and experience of their parents' life:

He (father) is the one who has mainly pushed me through my younger years in terms of education. He has also inspired me because he had a good career with the police force and earned good money and really enjoyed it at the same time. He did go from, when they were younger not earning as much money. I have seen both sides from my dad...He has had a long-term career, and that's pushed me on in school and go to university and go from there into a career. (Rachel, Business Management)

My mam has had multiple pub businesses, and I was brought up in pubs. I don't think I have been influenced by my mam. I think it came from university.... and my dad, he has got his own shop but I think it's more the shop they have got. That's not what I want to do but the management side of pubs that interests me. (Yasmin, Business Management)

John's career plan was inadvertently directed by his father:

I remember one time that he (father) said that he went for a job interview and the guy had a look at it (drawing) and ripped it up and said you need to expand more. You need to be more open-minded which was why I took fine art. (John, Fine Art)

Whereas Tammy's mother's influence was not focused on an actual career it was on Tammy's education:

She (mum) stressed it to us that we needed to go to university. She doesn't mind what jobs we do after that....my mam said look get a degree then you will have the choice and then you won't have to go back later on in life when you have a mortgage. (Tammy, Fine Art)

The students who took part in this research have suggested the university has changed them in some way. For most of the participants they have added to their original identity. For some, this is developing and building on the fluidity of their identity as an artist; for others there may be a shift in identity towards recognising themselves as a university student. As discussed, this shift in identity can develop through being, self-discovery, belonging and

peripheral participation. Similarly, and as discussed previously, strategies to career building constantly evolve. The five orientations I highlighted as being strategies to career building appear to be important to the development and building of the students' career aspirations.

Chapter 5 - Conclusions

My findings on career building bring a different element to the current research as it is conducted using photographs taken by the participants; this gives additional depth and richness to the research (Ryan and Ogilvie, 2011). Moreover, the development of student identity in higher education has not been applied to the field of careers. This research explores the role of careers and employment services in developing student career aspirations. This is an area currently under explored. The conclusions of this research are presented as follows: a discussion on the implications of orientations to career development. Here I outline the different orientations business management and fine art students tend to lean towards. I ask what makes a rich learning and teaching environment and appropriate career and employment services, contrasting the varying needs between the two subject areas under discussion. I should make it clear at this point that my intention was never to offer a rigorous comparison between the subject areas; however, my findings surface an obvious difference between the two. I also loop back to my introductory comments on graduate level positions. I reflect on my professional practice and learning and I discuss limitations to this research and potential areas for further exploration. I defend and discuss my experience of using a visual research methodology as a novel aspect of my thesis. The chapter concludes with the future agenda and recommendations.

5.1 Implications of orientations

As indicated, I see the orientations as heuristic devices by which I mean they help us to interpret what may be going on in terms of student strategies for career building. I do not propose these orientations as neat categories into which students nicely fit; rather they are

tendencies which may shift over time. Most importantly, I see them not so much as inherent orientations in the student but as reflections of the kind of teaching and learning environments they encounter alongside the kind of career and employment advice provided. The variations in the student experiences between fine art and business management show this to be the case.

There are resonances between career building orientations and the notions of 'deep' and 'surface learning' offered by Marten and Saljo (1976). These authors insist that deep learning, in which the student searches for meaning rather than learn by memorising, is generated by the kind of teaching that fosters it. Similarly, through understanding the student career orientation(s) the university experience can be adapted to help students to build their career aspirations. For instance, students with an Intrinsic Motivation Orientation i.e. passion for a subject (associated more with fine art students) can be nurtured to consider a potential career. Students with an Extrinsic Motivation Orientation i.e. those students who crave external rewards (for example, praise, high grades or pay) will need to have elements of the intrinsic if learning is to be sustained. The reason for this is once the reward is achieved, or removed, the likelihood of the student to make continued gains diminishes (Stipek, 1996).

Clearly, and from the first orientation I discussed in the findings chapter, students who take a placement year, or some form of work experience whilst at university, usually develop a strong sense of direction. The value of work experience is important in the development of career aspiration strategies and in developing a professional identity with the subject. The development of the students' identity through practice can change students' orientations and move students forward to enable them to build and achieve their career aspirations. As Wenger, 1998 suggests there is a relationship between practice and identity in that it is through doing that professionals gain a sense of identification with their profession. Those

students who lack confidence and have a Weak Planning Orientation may struggle with this identification and the university can help to develop this. Having a Weak Planning Orientation is not necessarily counter-productive in the early exploratory years of undergraduate life. The Dream Orientation is a powerful orientation to strategy building where students are already envisioning themselves in specific professions or owning specific objects. The student requires knowledge or experience to reach the next stage of their goal and this is where the university careers and employment services may be able to support them. It is also where attention can be paid to the curriculum as I discuss with respect to my second research question.

5.2 What supports rich learning and teaching environments?

What emerged from my second question was the importance of students identifying with their subject and where possible with a profession aligned to it. Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) are not normally associated with formal education but the emphasis they place on situated learning, that is learning within professional communities emerged to be of importance in the building of rich teaching and learning environments.

The contrast between the fine art participants and business management participants was striking. Both subject areas are utilising the university's learning environment; however, they are placing emphasis on different elements. For example, art students practise their art in the university studios working to art briefs to gain experience, whereas business management students access professional experience external to the university environment through mentors and work placements. My findings point to the centrality of work experience and associated activities such as joining the I.O.D. mentoring scheme, attending lectures and visiting lecturers' guest seminars. The University needs to encourage students to identify with a profession.

The teaching environment turned out to be important, for example, fine art students use the university studio space to explore ideas and take risks in a safe environment with peers and practitioners. Zepke, Leach and Prebble (2006) found that universities can influence students through an environment that encourages an active learner approach, and this appears to be what is happening in the art faculty. Students have somewhere to go to progress their work with peer support. It was noteworthy that business management did not have an equivalent facility. My research findings support the comment made by Wenger who stated "education is not merely formative - it is transformative" (Wenger, 1998:263), but for this to happen it needs facilities such as the studio space.

‘Belonging’ was a very strong theme in my research especially for the fine art students who appear to develop their identity with art through belonging activities and the formation of emergent communities of practice. Fine Art students placed a strong emphasis on the support from their peers (friends) and tutors in helping them to develop an identity with the subject. Friends offered support and tutors encouraged the element of risk and ‘trial and error’ in their art work.

In addition to the role friends play in identity development there is also identity development through a form of peripheral participation which not only encompasses work experience it also includes mentoring, tutor support and the influence from family members. For the business management students, mentors play a major part in helping them develop their career aspirations. The Business Management students have access to a formal mentoring programme through the I.O.D. scheme and they also have mentors and practising practitioners who deliver guest lectures or with whom students come into contact through their work experience. Students appear to need input from practising practitioners in the relevant field of study. Fine art tutors are typically practising artists who can relate

professional experiences to the students. In contrast, business management students tend to rely on mentors and practitioners from outside the University.

Students appear to rely on the University to develop and build their career aspirations. This research suggests the building of student aspirations is best left to practising practitioners working in the field. As indicated, for fine art students this maybe their lecturers who are practising artists and for business management students the Institute of Directors (I.O.D.) mentors or visiting professionals working in the field. University lecturers and tutors can build students' career aspirations through the facilitation of these forms of peripheral participation.

5.3 Graduate level entry

In my introduction I indicate that fine art students have lower rate of entry in the professions than in other subject areas. Yet I also show them to be the most closely aligned to professional practice in the University. What explains this? It needs acknowledging that the DLHE survey is not sufficiently longitudinal for some groups of students such as fine art. They secure jobs but not graduate level positions (Swani, 2016). As discussed previously, fine art students begin their career initially in portfolio careers. If the DLHE survey was carried out five years after graduation (currently being discussed) instead of six months after graduation a different 'picture may be painted' of the fine art students success in the graduate level labour market. In addressing the relevant benchmark statements, Ball et al., 2010) argue that fine art students:

...would benefit from improved preparation for the transition into work, with further opportunities for and greater visibility of work placements, business and enterprise skills, and a good grounding in technical skills and discipline specific knowledge. (Ball et al., 2010:xii)

Whether this adaptation i.e. greater visibility of work placements for fine art students will support fine art students into graduate level positions earlier than is currently happening is untested. Similarly with business management students: would a focus on work placements and introducing practising practitioners as mentors prove to enhance the current graduate level figures? My research is suggesting potentially yes if students' career aspirations and strategies can be developed early in their degree course. The development and implications for careers and employment services in supporting students with their varying needs and orientations is discussed in section 5.5.2.2.

5.4 Limitations of research

Although I defend my choice of qualitative methods as a means by which I can dig into the meanings students make of their university and career building experience, I accept that my cohort could not possibly expose all the issues connected to this. There would need to be more qualitative studies against which to evaluate mine. Nonetheless I hope I have initiated a shift in orthodoxy, particularly in the deployment of photo-elicitation.

I cannot prove that photo-elicitation yields richer data than standard interviewing although I feel that the indications are that it does. I am also aware of the limitations of the scope of this research as I have only focused on two curriculum areas so I am unable to acknowledge that all students will have the same five orientations to developing their career aspirations, and their experience at university may also differ.

5.4.1 Potential areas for further exploration

Four potential areas for further exploration were highlighted during this research:

1. Further research could be conducted with students outside of business management and fine art. It is evident from the findings that these two groups of students both have different needs. They both look to develop their identity mainly through practice and mixing with practising practitioners; however, the curriculum may need developing differently. Business management students tend to develop their career aspirations through work experience and mixing with practising practitioners; whereas, fine art students appear to need to acquaint themselves with a community of practice to develop themselves from an art student to an artist and not so much with a career aspiration. To gain a clear 'picture' of how the curriculum could be developed outside of fine art and business management this research could be replicated with other subject areas.
2. In addition, replicating this research with other degree subjects could be extended into a pre-1992 university. So far, this research has only been conducted with post-1992 university students; however, as I mentioned earlier Rothwell et al. (2007) found there are some differences between post- and pre-1992 university students, particularly in relation to confidence. Once again this might have an effect on how career aspirations are developed and the support students require.
3. With the introduction and increase in tuition fees, paying back parents is an extrinsic motivation that students may adhere to more and is worthy of further exploration.
4. Finally, this research is focussed on students aged 18-24, whereas 22% of full-time undergraduate entrants in the UK are mature students HESA (2017a), and they may have different orientations to younger students when building their career aspirations and require a different level of support. For this reason further research could be

conducted with mature students. In addition, this research could be replicated with students from various demographic groups, for example, gender and ethnicity to understand if orientations differ according to demographics; thus giving the University the opportunity to adapt their support if required.

5.5 Future agenda

This section reflects on my professional practice and learning. I discuss my contribution to practice which I have split into three key areas. Firstly, I present the potential use of visual research when conducting research on careers and employment. Secondly, the implications for careers and employment services and how they might adapt their current service to help and support students in developing and reaching their career aspirations. Finally, I discuss the relationship between the development and building of identity and self-efficacy in helping students whilst at university to build and develop their career aspirations focussing on belonging, professional experience and mentors.

5.5.1 Reflection on my professional practice and learning

This study has informed my professional practice and has widened my knowledge from the typical quantitative and qualitative methodologies applied to careers and employment research. From my experience of using a visual research methodology I will definitely consider using visual research again as long as it fits with my research questions and the knowledge I am hoping to gain. I have discussed through using visual research I can uncover a different kind of knowledge that is more in-depth and generates a greater understanding. This is important to most of the research I undertake. In addition, I did not perceive or expect the outcome I had from using visual research; for example, through the participants' interaction

with their photographs at their interviews they appeared to adopt the auto-driven photo-elicitation process and interact with it in a positive manner. By discussing the participants' photographs I felt a closer connection with the participants, it was easier to understand what they were talking about through their images and I almost felt as though I knew my participants more intimately; I don't believe I would have had the same effect through a standalone interview. I was also surprised at how some of the photographs strengthened and reinforced the participants' comments, for example, when I discussed Samuel's alien drawings and Rachel's sketchbooks with her Grand Design drawings. These images made me realise how important this aspiration was to them and again I felt a personal connection as though I was entering into a part of their private life.

My research has also shown that the visual can constitute an expressive language in its own right; this is exemplified in the photographs the participants submitted as part of the ADPE process, for example, some of the photographs provide vivid illustration (e.g. Tammy's photographs on friendship); some provide amplification of an aspiration (e.g. Harriet's photographs of design sketchbooks); some offer symbolic representation (e.g. John's photograph of his passport to denote his desire to travel). Some of the photographs seem to come from a visceral place (e.g. Kam's photographic tributes to her father and mother) and as I discussed previously some of the visual goes beyond words but my intention was never to interpret the image. The visual was used as a means of eliciting accounts.

The adaptations I made to the ADPE process (see Figure 1.0) enhanced the research validity and findings through additional forms of recording i.e. audio and video recording, transcribing and participants checking the interpretation. In addition, the above three areas also removed some of the disadvantages of ADPE; for example, Meo (2010) found difficulties in identifying which photograph was being referred to during the transcribing of the interview. This was not

a problem encountered when using video recording. I also found the recording of my initial thoughts before the face-to-face interview introduced new questions. My research supports Strecker (1997) and Gauntlett and Holzwarth (2006) who found images are open to a range of interpretations. If I had relied purely on the image my interpretation would have been incorrect; for example, I did not realise photograph 2.0 related to art therapy.

I found the additional knowledge gained and the benefits from using a visual research methodology contributed significantly to the research questions; for example, the photographs appeared to help the participants structure their discussion. Deviation from the research questions could easily be brought back without difficulty by following and referring back to the story held by the images. The participants appeared relaxed which I assume was because they felt they were in control and were comfortable in talking about their own photographs. Sometimes an interview can feel daunting as it can be associated with a pass or fail, for instance when somebody is interviewed for a job. My experience of using visual research reflects the findings of many visual researchers, for example, participants engage in conversation and respond to images without indecision (Meo, 2010; Schwartz, 1989). According to Van Auken et al. (2010) photo-elicitation also appears to aid recall and more evocative accounts of incidents than traditional interviews. Without running a set of interviews separate from the ADPE process I am unable to compare the variation in response; however, I did find some of the participants' revealed personal, sensitive information during the research. I am unsure if I would have had the same response with only a face-to-face interview.

I also had time to reflect and develop questions based on the participants' images. The photographs opened up new lines of enquiry that I may not have considered exploring without seeing the images before the interview, supported by O'Brien (2013); for example,

Yusef produced a photograph of his accommodation to represent his friends and the people he has met (photograph 17.0). Without this image it seems unlikely the conversation would have led to the exploration of how aspirations are developed outside of Yusef's course or work experience and the social support living in halls can give a student.

The only disadvantage I found with using visual research is it is a long process and there are many stages, for example: 1) brief is designed for participants; 2) participants are recruited, 3) the brief is discussed with the participants; 4) the participants go away and take their photographs; 5) photographs are submitted to the researcher; 6) researcher analyses the photographs and memos comments ready for interview; 7) interview is arranged; 8) interview takes place; 9) interview is transcribed; whereas, for example, if I was to conduct a standalone interview or run a focus group, there are four stages – 2), 7), 8), and 9). However, the advantages outweigh this disadvantage in relation to the in-depth knowledge that is gained from using this methodology. At this stage there is nothing I would consider changing or adapting in the ADPE process other than what I have already trialled.

When I started my path of discovery using visual research I did not expect the interest it would generate from other researchers and careers and employment practitioners. I started this research with a focus on visual research as a tool to capture the building of career aspirations to answer my research questions; however, the use of visual research became as important as the answers to my research questions and has ended up a key contribution not only to my practice but also to the wider research community.

In addition to my experience with using visual research, I was surprised how important identity was in the development of student aspirations and career aspirations for both fine art and business management students and the importance of belonging to communities of

practice for the fine art students. My intention is to support the development of identity and belonging through my professional practice by implementing the recommendations highlighted later in this chapter.

5.5.2 Possible contribution to practice

There are three main areas of possible contribution to practice:

1. The role of visual research when conducting research in careers and employment which again is steering away from the traditional quantitative methods normally applied.
2. The implications and potential development of the current careers and employment services within higher education away from offering students a traditional career service, by giving students the relevant tools and equipment to prepare students for employment through for example CV preparation and interview techniques and working alongside subject lecturers to get their career messages across to help students develop and build their career aspirations.
3. The relationship between the development and building of identity and self-efficacy through belonging, professional experience and working alongside mentors when developing strategies to develop career aspirations.

I will now discuss my contributions to practice in detail and make recommendations:

5.5.2.1 The role of visual research in careers and employment

Previously I discussed how visual research could potentially be used as a research methodology in Careers and Employment research to bring a new depth of knowledge to the subject area. My experience of using a visual research methodology can give a new insight into how to support students and could be developed not only in research on Careers and Employment but also in the normal working day to try and extract a different type of knowledge. As mentioned previously research on Careers and Employment is normally based on quantitative research. Additional knowledge could be gained if Careers Services considered using a visual research methodology in their research. I would concur with McNiff (2012:8) who stated: “The research industry in health, education and psychology has been exclusively identified with scientific methods and their quests for impersonal and objective knowledge.” McNiff continues “We are easily put on the defensive when confronted with the personal aspects of art-based enquiry.” (McNiff, 2012:8)

Through applying a visual research methodology to my research the research came ‘alive.’ The career orientations were revealed through images and supported the participants to explain and reveal their orientations. My experience of using ADPE has been positive in that it generated a deeper understanding to my research than if I had used the traditional research methods associated with careers and employment research. The adaptations I made to the ADPE process (see figure 1.0) enhanced the process and I would recommend these adaptations if using ADPE to generate knowledge. Two recommendations are evident from my experience of using a visual research methodology: consider using alternative methodologies to the typical research methodologies normally used in careers and employment research and use an adapted ADPE process similar to the process I used (see section on recommendations for a full list of recommendations).

5.5.2.2 Implications for careers and employment services

The role of the careers and employment services may need to adapt to enable them to support students in achieving their career aspirations. Careers and employment services can support students in achieving their aspirations by reviewing embedded practices and possibly moving away from the traditional Careers Service offering. Typical Careers practice consists of a Careers Advisor sitting down with the student for a maximum of twenty minutes to discuss their career options by asking a series of questions. Similar to an interview the student has a few minutes to answer the question. If the student were asked to forward a photograph before the meeting this might be a good way to begin to probe options. The student would have had time to think and consider what images to produce. The students taking part in this research came to the interview prepared for the discussion, a finding supported by Van Auken et al. (2010). In addition, by encouraging the student to submit photographs, I found when I came to interview the student their photographs helped them to explain their point, a finding reinforced by Guillemin and Drew (2010), for example, photograph 5.0 – Alien Sketches submitted by John reinforces and strengthens his comment on his interest in drawing aliens:

...it's what I have always liked drawing ever since I was a small child....I got so hooked on it. I have got a whole block of paper just scribbling you know. (John, Fine Art)

Sketches of aliens drawn on different types of paper in blue ink and pencil suggest they have been drawn at different times. The photograph gives us no reason to doubt his comment. Photographs can endorse a person's passion for a subject as in John's case. Photographs taken by the student can give careers and employment staff an insight into the student's world and a deeper understanding of what the student is saying. As discussed photographs can endorse what the student says and are useful for Careers staff when trying to direct and advise a student to help them reach their career aspirations. The enhancements I made to the ADPE process I would recommend using for careers and employment research, but from my

experience of using ADPE my adaptations will not be suitable when used as part of a careers advisory interview. The main reason is the student expects advice and guidance during their careers advisory interview, not after; whereas, audio and video recording and transcribing are used after the interview for analysis and reflection and would be too late for the student. Nevertheless, the ADPE process without the adaptations could be transferred to the career advice interviews (see recommendation 3).

My findings suggest that the Careers Service would be best suited empowering students by giving them the tools and language to pursue their career aspirations. Careers and Employment staff are not practising practitioners in the students' field of study. For this reason, their role could be adjusted so that they concentrate on advertising employment opportunities and preparing the students for interviews including curriculum vitae (CV) preparation, telephone techniques, interview skills and psychometric testing rather than trying to develop and build the students' career aspirations. On the other hand, practitioners in the field, for example, practising artists and marketing and human resource practitioners can help students to perceive and develop their career aspirations. Career messages should be channelled through the fine art lecturers as they are the key influencers to the building and development of fine art students' career aspirations. My findings are indicating that students tend to listen and are inspired by practitioners from their field of study; however, lecturers, mentors and practitioners need to be aware of what they say to their students and how this can have a negative or positive effect on that student's decision-making. Business management students appear to be influenced by practitioners in the field, thus requiring different support to fine art students. The careers and employment services could be used to introduce practitioners from industry to contribute to the curriculum delivery as and when required and to help business management students develop career aspirations and build strategies to their career planning. The practitioners could deliver some of the lectures or

mentor the students as both these areas appear to be effective in developing student career aspirations (see recommendation 4).

5.5.2.3 Relationship between the development of identity and self-efficacy when building strategies to career aspirations

There are several conclusions that emerged from this research in relation to the development of identity and self-efficacy. Firstly, the building of communities within the subject area will support students in developing a) an identity with the subject b) self-efficacy with the subject. My findings have shown that developing an identity with the subject is important to the development of student career aspirations. In addition, students develop confidence through developing an identity with the subject. Business management students appear to develop confidence if their grades improve which seems to be instigated through the students group work in particular the Enterprise module; whereas, fine art students appear to develop their confidence through constructive peer feedback and belonging to an art community (see recommendations 5 and 6).

Work experience in the relevant field of study should be encouraged to enable students to gain knowledge and skills through legitimate peripheral participation, and where students new to the field can practice their skills alongside experienced practitioners. This is important to the development of the student's identity and as Wenger (1998:215) states "we accumulate skills and information, not in the abstract as ends in themselves, but in the service of an identity." My research with business management students has shown that having professional experience has helped students develop their career aspirations and strategies through the development of their professional identity and confidence. This research is

showing that University is a path of discovery and when backed by work experience, direct or indirect, can give students a career direction (see recommendation 7).

5.5.3 Recommendations

From the three areas I have highlighted as my contribution to practice seven recommendations are evident. Recommendations one to three suggest a flexible approach to how careers and employment research is conducted and how auto-driven photo-elicitation can be used within the careers service. Recommendations four to seven suggest how the University Careers and Employment Services and how the curriculum could be developed to help students develop and build their career aspirations.

Recommendation 1: From my experience of using visual research I would recommend researchers researching careers and employment consider taking on a flexible approach to their research and be open to using different methodologies instead of using the traditional research methods associated with careers and employment. This will enable researchers to access a different type of knowledge.

Recommendation 2: Adaptation of the ADPE process in-line with how I conducted the ADPE process (see figure 1.0); for example, introduction of audio and visual recording and transcribing interviews aids analysis and makes the process more robust.

Recommendation 3: Consider using photographs to stimulate conversation, for example, introducing photographs into the careers interview. This may access a more in-depth understanding of the student's requirements than a standalone interview.

Recommendation 4: Introduce students to practising practitioners and potential mentors. My findings point to the need for students to identify with a profession; the I.O.D. mentoring scheme could be extended as the business management participant who was involved with this scheme found it helped him to develop his career aspirations. In addition, practitioners in the workplace or delivering lectures can have an influence on the development and building of career aspirations, especially practitioners whom a student may be able to relate to.

Recommendation 5: For business management students, focus on building students' self-efficacy through helping them develop an identity with the subject. Through implementing elements of the QAA (2018) 'Enterprise and Entrepreneurship Education Guidance' confidence may increase for Business management students as this will help build an entrepreneurial 'mind-set' which according to the QAA (2018) can develop: a self-awareness of personality and social identity, develop personal ambition and goals and increase personal confidence and resilience.

Recommendation 6: For fine art students; in addition to the implementation of some of the QAA (2018) guidance, fine art students appear to benefit from being part of a community of practice. They have the need to belong and friendship is very important to their development. Encouraging the development of communities of practice within the art studio space and interaction with peers will help build fine art students' self-efficacy and an identity with the subject area.

Recommendation 7: Encourage business management students to undertake a placement or a period of work experience as this helps them to develop their career aspirations and their professional identity; for example, Yusef suggests his placement year was instrumental in

developing his career aspirations and Rachel whose placement experience appears to have given her a clearer career direction and now describes herself as “very career focused.”

To conclude, this research has not only established five strategies that the students use to develop and build their career aspirations, I have also found the University offers a transformative experience and helps to build student and subject identity and self-efficacy. Work experience, self-discovery, role models (external practitioners, tutors and mentors) and a sense of belonging are important to student development in building career aspirations and create a rich learning environment for the student. Business management and fine art students’ requirements appear to be very diverse in terms of the support they need in developing their career aspirations. Fine art students are intrinsically motivated and appear to focus on developing their identity as an artist, requiring support from university lecturers, and they seem to have a need to belong to an art community (internal or external to the University) to enable them to develop their career aspirations. Business management students are more extrinsically motivated than fine art students they seek advice and guidance from external practitioners and tend to benefit from work experience in developing their career aspirations. I would argue it is important that lecturers, universities and policymakers recognise the students’ orientation for studying fine art and business management by seeking to understand the particular orientation which is motivating the student at a given point in time, so tailored support and ways of teaching and learning can be adapted. To be more effective the Careers and Employment Services may want to consider how they deliver their current offering and potentially adjust to complement the students' needs. I would also recommend careers and employment researchers further consider using a visual research methodology in future research to bring additional new insights to career and employment research.

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Appendix A - Comparison between the QAA Art and Design and Business and Management Subject Benchmark Statements Generic Skills

| Art and Design Benchmark Statements (QAA, 2017) | Business and Management Benchmark Statements (QAA, 2015) |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| The capacity to be creative | |
| An aesthetic sensibility | Emotional intelligence and empathy |
| Intellectual inquiry | Conceptual and critical thinking, analysis, synthesis and evaluation |
| Skills in team working | Ability to work collaboratively both internally and with external customers and an awareness of mutual interdependence |
| | Building and maintaining relationships |
| An appreciation of diversity | Ability to work with people from a range of cultures |
| The ability to conduct research in a variety of modes | |
| The capacity to work independently, encouraging resilience and self-determination | Self-management: a readiness to accept responsibility and flexibility, to be resilient, self-starting and appropriately assertive, to plan, organise and manage time |
| Quality of critically reflecting on one's own learning and development | Self-reflection: self-analysis and an awareness/sensitivity to diversity in terms of people and cultures. This includes a continuing appetite for development |
| An appreciation of quality and detail | |
| The ability to factor ethical considerations into creative practice | |
| The ability to communicate in a range of formats. | Communication and listening including the ability to produce clear, structured business communications in a variety of media |
| | Articulating and effectively explaining information |

Appendix B – Briefing Sheets

Briefing Sheet for Award Leaders

Introduction

As part of my Doctorate in Education I am exploring Business Management and Fine Art students' career aspirations and ambitions. I am intending to explore critical moments / factors and experiences that have shaped students future career aspirations / ambitions. The information gained from my research will help academics and careers staff to consider how they develop careers aspirations and future ambitions in their students for example if the research finds the majority of students develop their aspirations based on academics telling real-life stories (case-studies) then the university should develop its academics to give more case-studies during class. If students develop their career aspirations and /or future ambitions through work experience then the university should look at implementing more work experience into courses etc.

Methodology

The students will be asked to take six original photographs that are meaningful to them in terms of their university experience and has influenced their career choice or ambitions. One of the photographs will sum up either the student's career aspirations or an ambition that was promoted by their university experience, this could be travel, adventure or a community project etc. The photographs will be used as the basis of an interview centred on student explication of their choices and prompts from myself to elicit student accounts relevant to my research.

How the Student / Participant will benefit from taking Part in my Research

The Student / participant will benefit from taking part in my research by receiving careers advice (if they want it), a chance to find out about the employment services available to them and if the student hasn't already started to consider their career their interview and photographs will help the participants to explore their career aspirations and give them an understanding of where they are now on their career plan.

Student / Participant Criteria

I was hoping that you will be able to recommend eight of your students who are on a full-time Fine Art course and are now in their 2nd year of study. The students need to be open and engaging, aged between 18-24 years and are first-generation students (students who are the first in their family to attend university). It does not matter if the participants are male or female although I would prefer a mix if possible, ethnicity is also not important when choosing students as it is not a factor I am analysing but ethnicity will be noted during data collection. I am just looking for a representative group from the Fine Art course.

My deadline for setting the students their photography task is mid-February 2014 with completion of the task end of February 2014.

Helene Turley, Careers and The Workplace, Host Organisation

Business Management and Fine Art Students' Career Ambitions Case-studies

Research: Through photographs and discussion I am exploring critical moments / factors and experiences that have shaped students future career aspirations and ambitions.

What I need from you:

1. Six photographs by **28th February 2014** (see section below **Task**)
2. One hour in the week beginning **10th March 2014** that I can conduct a videoed interview with you to discuss your photographs
3. Your permission to record you as part of this research - as part of my research I would like to record not only in photographs but also on video the research process. This is so I can share the research process and findings with Doctorate supervisors, examiners and critics who may have an alternative view to my research findings.

Task: Take six original photographs (on a mobile phone or camera) that are meaningful to you in terms of your university experience and / or has influenced your career choice. One of the photographs must sum up your career aspirations or an ambition that was prompted by your university experience.

Please send your photographs to Helene Turley H.Turley@wlv.ac.uk by the end of **Friday 28th February 2014**.

Week beginning **10th March 2014** I will meet with you to discuss your photographs; the kind of questions I will be asking are as followed:

- *Tell me about your photographs? Here we will explore what your photographs depict and how these photographs (images) make you feel.*
- *Were there other photographs you wish you could have taken?*
- *If you had to choose one photograph which one would you choose that sums up your career aspirations?*
- *If you could how would you have changed these images?*
- *If you had been given this task in your first year what photographs do you think you would have taken?*
- *Are there any further comments you would like to make about anything we have not covered?*

Your responses will be kept anonymous. I will analyse your answers and see what your photographs and responses tell me about your influences on your career aspirations / ambitions.

What I would like to offer you for helping me with this research is:

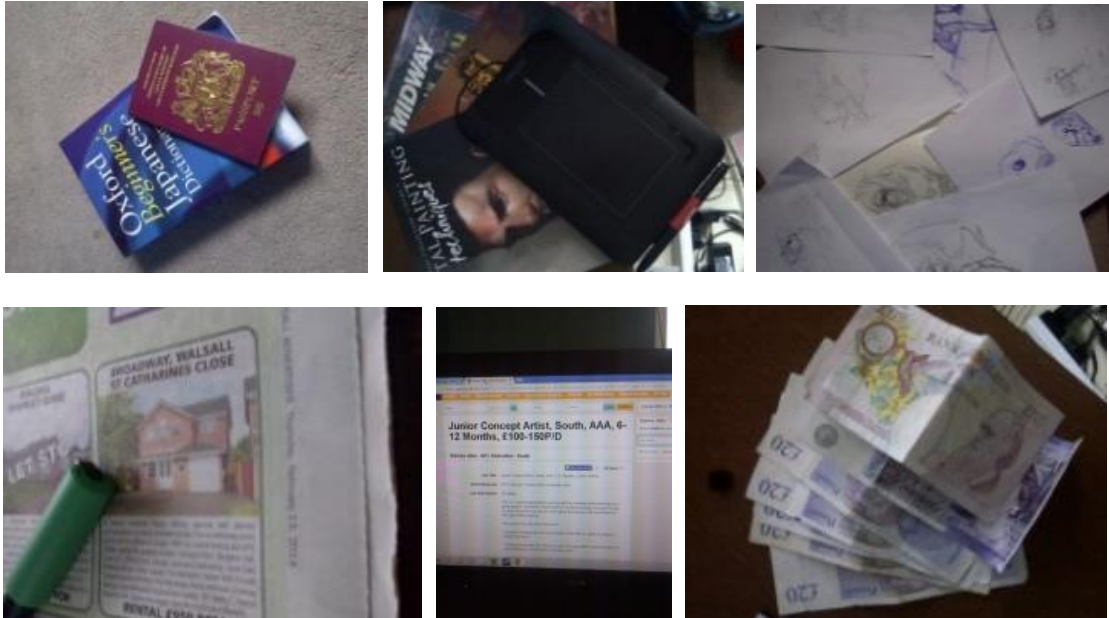
- Careers advice on the basis of what we discussed in this project
- A chance to find out about the University employment services
- An exploration of your career ambitions and where you are now on your career plan (if you have one).

Helene Turley H.Turley@wlv.ac.uk

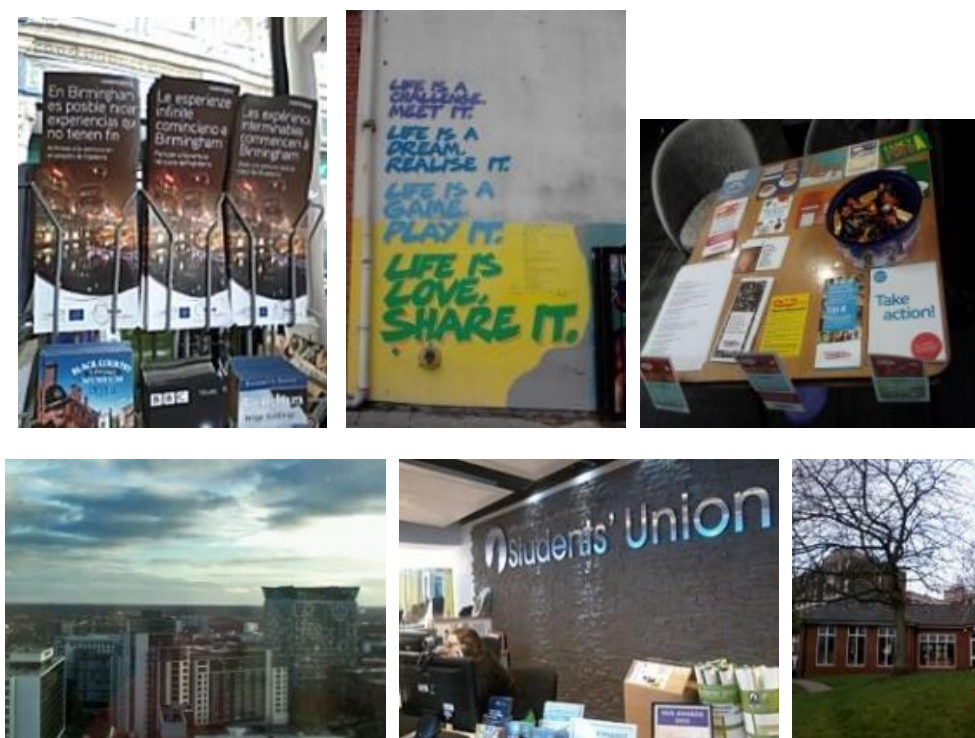
Appendix C - Participants Photographs

Fine Art Participants

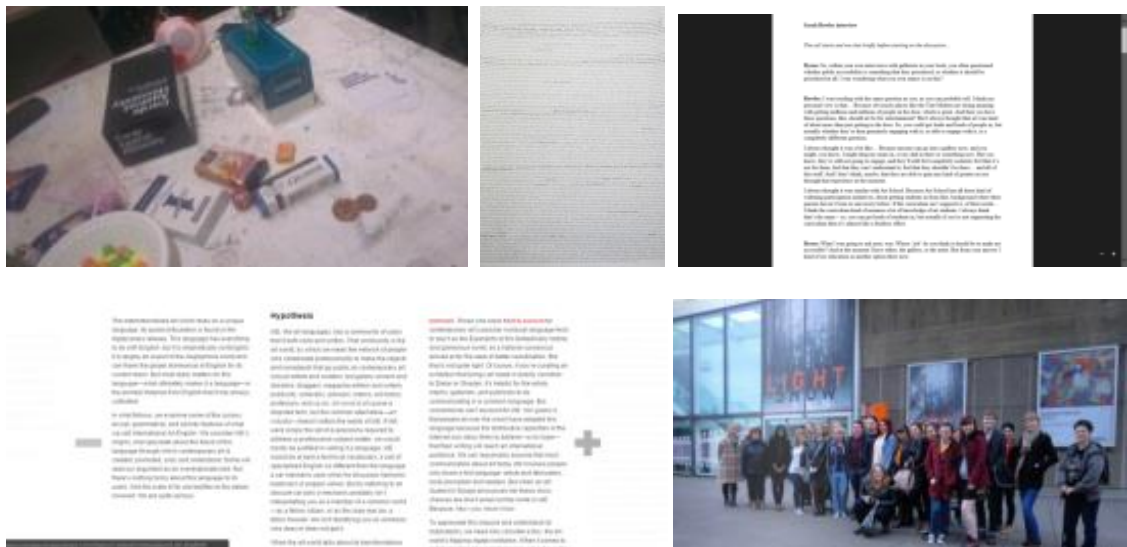
John



Paris



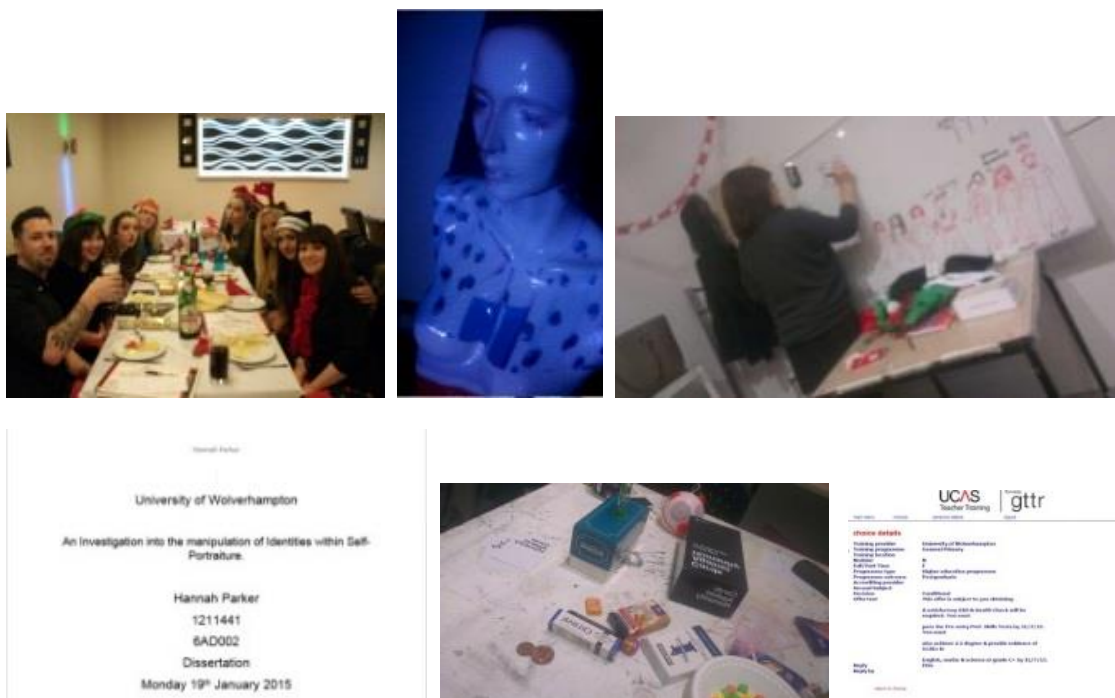
Amy



Ever tried. Ever failed. No matter. Try Again. Fail again. Fail better.

Samuel Beckett

Tammy



Gurpreet



Abstract

The emphasis of this dissertation investigates the relationship between the restrictions of vision and the ability to 'see more' more in the hyper visible. We are aware that there are countless types of 'restrictions' that we can identify with the notion of perception, and for that reason the dissertation will only cover the fundamentals that are assumed to detract us from being truly perceptive.

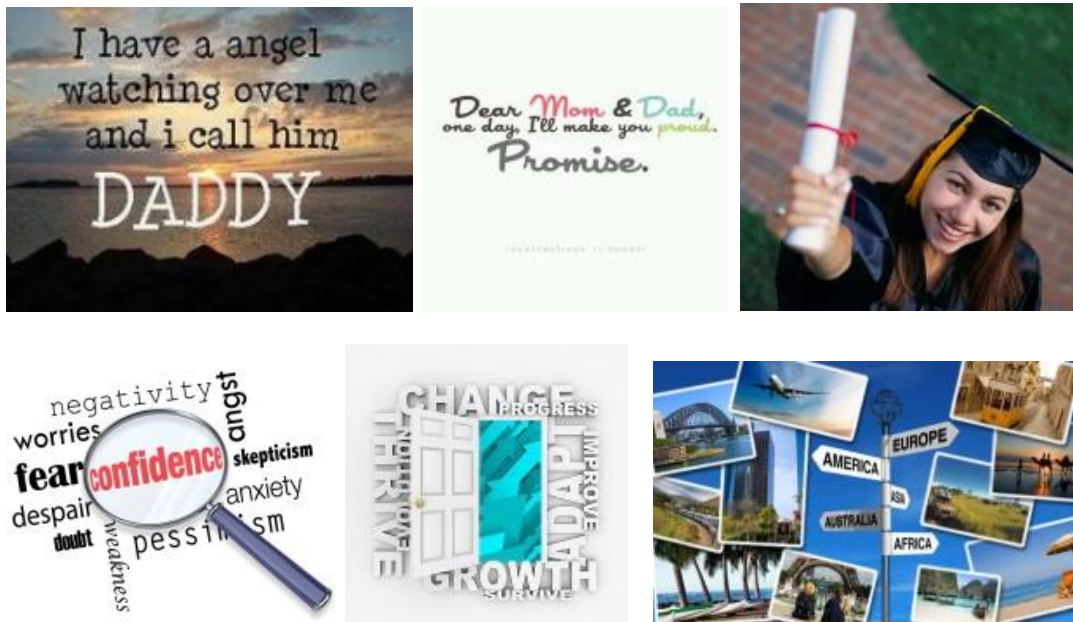


Trish

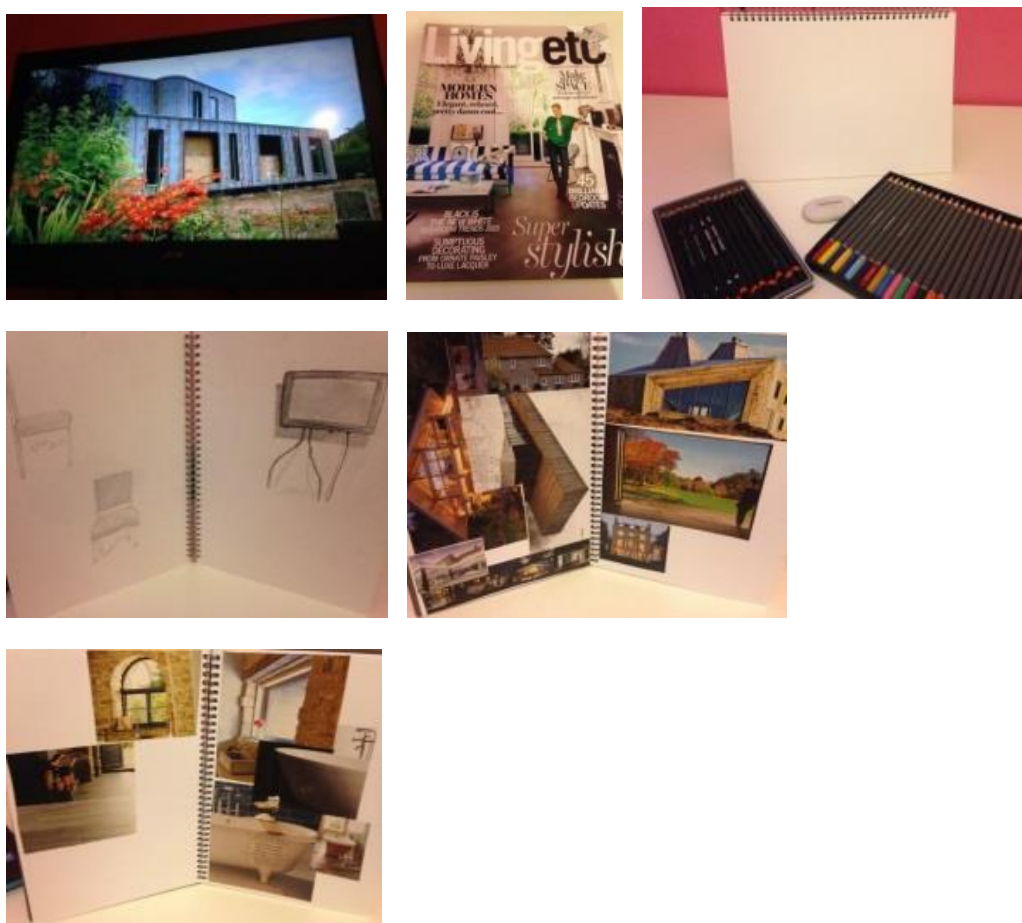


Business Management Participants

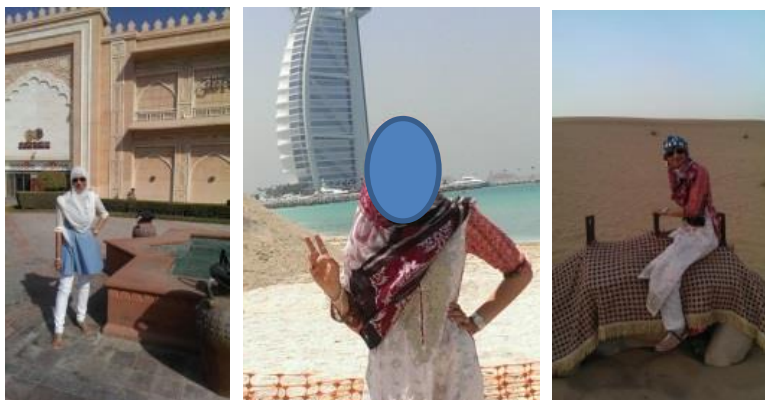
Kam



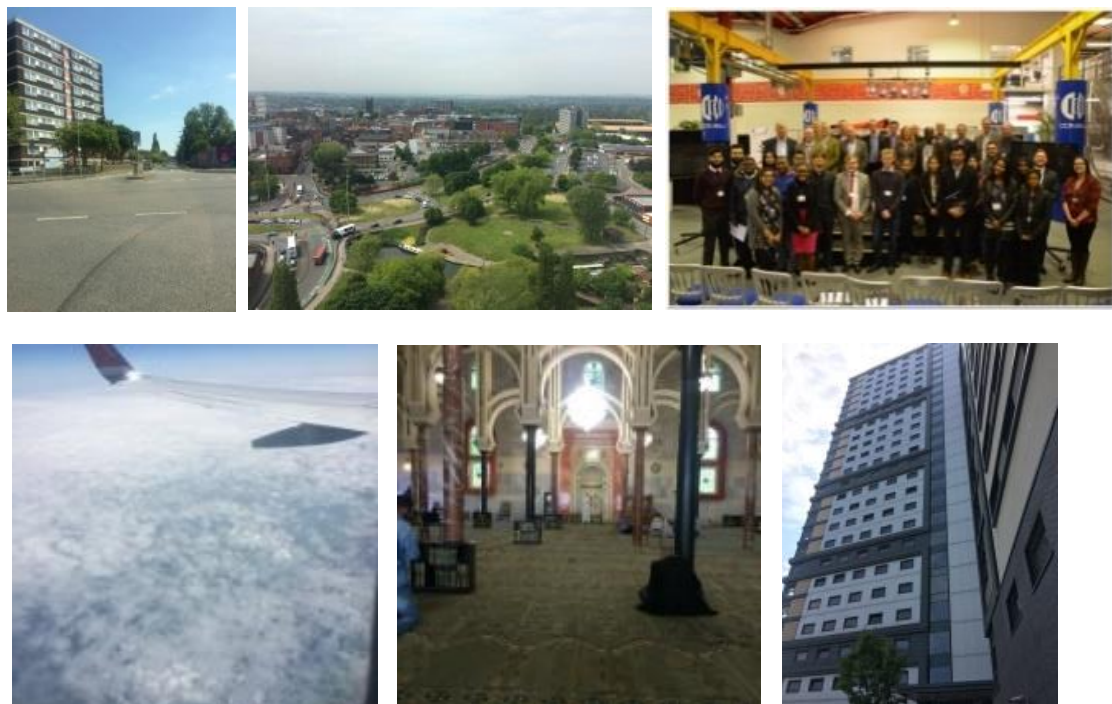
Harriet



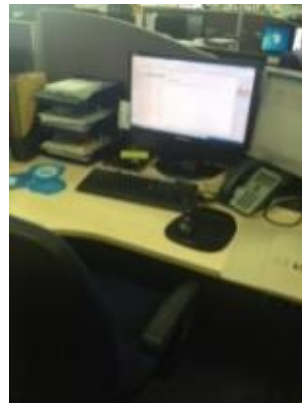
Anna



Yusef



Yasmin



Rachel

